

No. 248 / OCTOBER 1993



Back to the drawing board

The war on education



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For membership and/or launch details, please contact the Coordinator at DEA, 29-31, 3rd Floor, Cowper St. London EC2A 4AP
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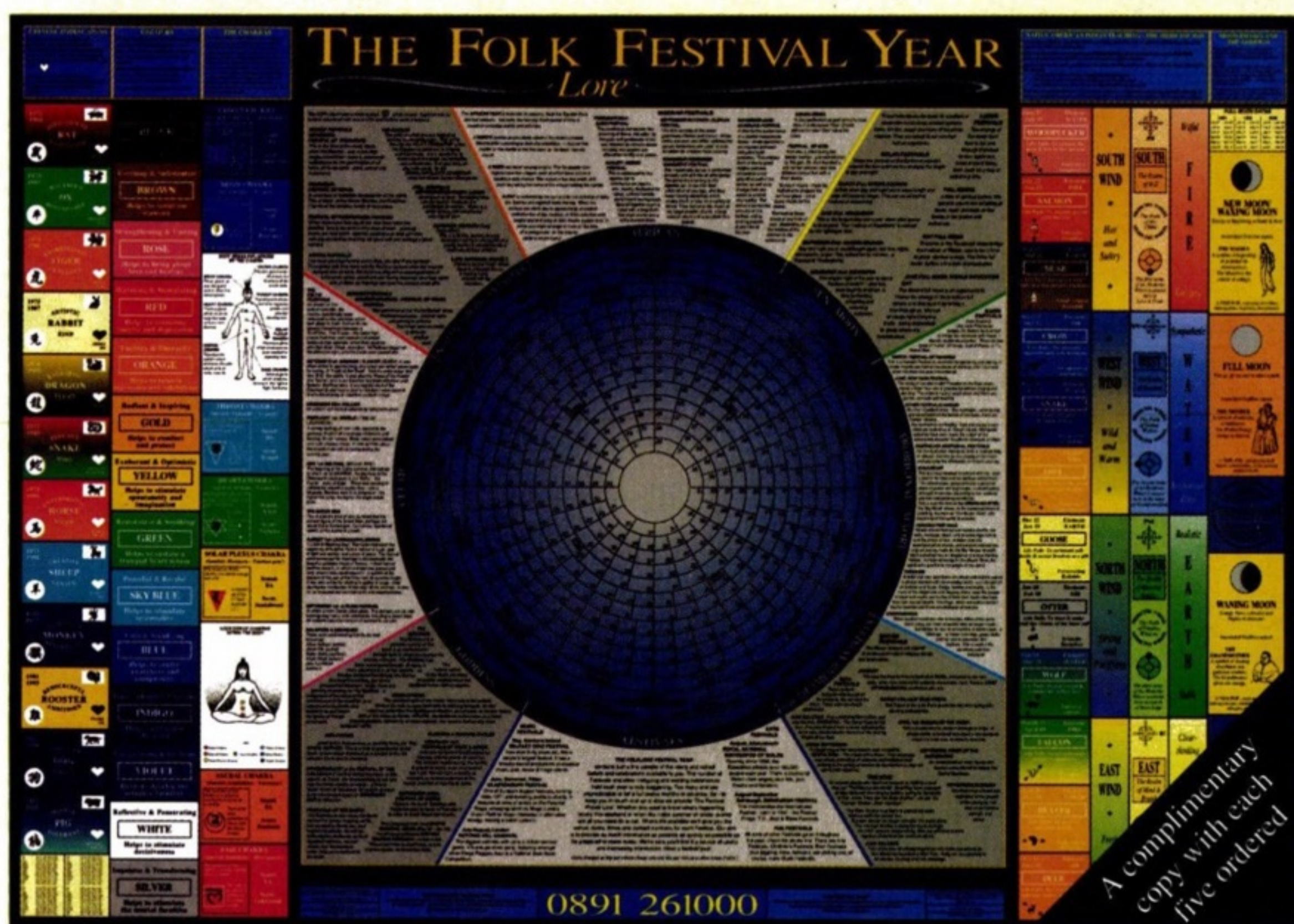
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C O N T E N T S

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH: INSIDE AN ISLAMIC SCHOOL IN CAMBODIA, BY CLAUDE SAUVAGEOT.

THIS MONTH'S THEME

Education

FROM THIS MONTH'S EDITOR

My daughter Rosa has just started school. She loves it. She loves her teacher, she gets on well with her classmates and she has a real sense of achievement every time she learns a new letter or does one of her detailed, laborious drawings. The school has been doing 'movement' as a theme, and she has made skeletons out of straws, written a story about the journey to school, and been to the local playground to watch how the swings and roundabouts move.

It is easy to lose this sense of joy as an adult. As I sifted through children's drawings from all over the world with Claire, the designer, we felt a sense of awe at the scope and variety of colour and design. The range of those children's imaginations made us both feel the limits of our own vision. The photos too, were an inspiration; from the delicate amber

light and concentrated expression of the Cambodian girl on the front cover to a group of tiny, brightly clothed children in Ecuador sitting in the dust and studying the same magazine; the children's dedication and their enjoyment shone through.

I knew that I wanted to hold onto that sense of endless possibility, of serious joy, in the magazine as a whole. It seemed somehow appropriate that I should be producing my first issue as an editor of the *New Internationalist* at the same time as Rosa started school – and even more so that its subject should be education. Like her, I am launching myself on a new venture – one which involves new ways of working and a new style of communicating. Education should not stop at school – it should be

something that goes with us throughout our adult lives as well. But all too many people never even get the chance to start down that road. They are forced to drop out of school in the first few crucial years – and then miss out on opportunities for the rest of their lives.

I believe in education. I believe that more and better education is a way of promoting equality in an unjust world. All children should be given the chance to go to schools that help them grow and learn throughout their lives. Like the children in the photos, they should be given the chance to apply and develop their talents. Like my daughter, they should come home each day with the joy of learning in their faces.

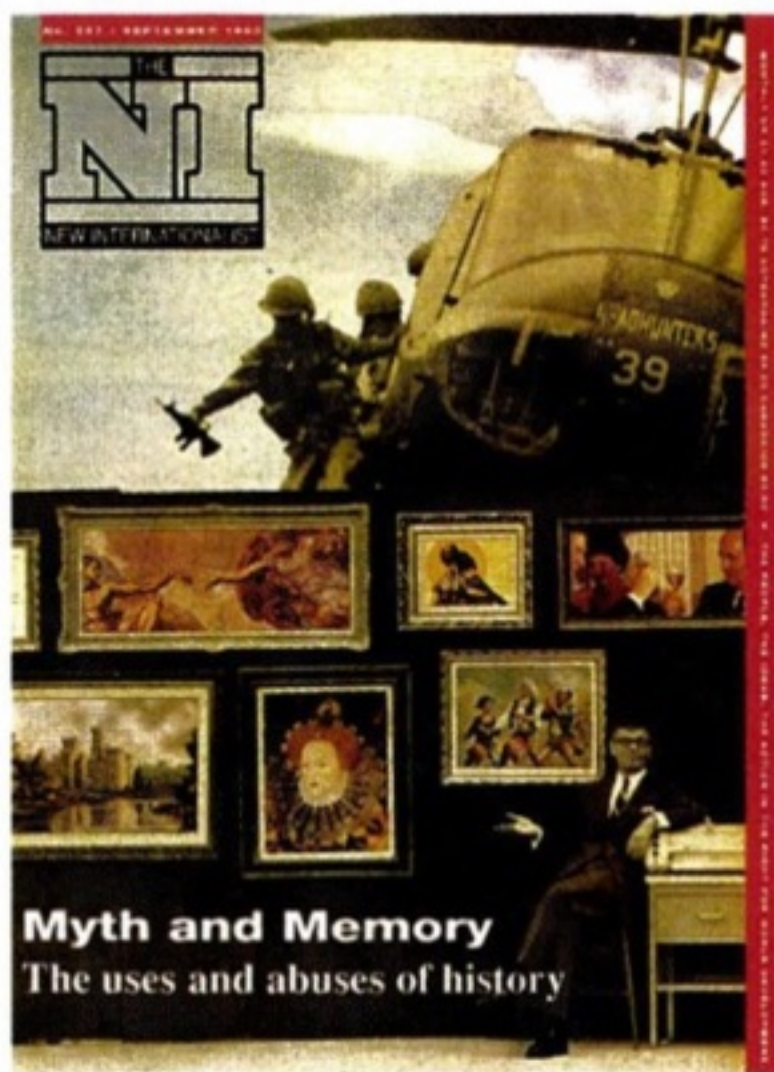


Nikki van der Gaag

*Nikki van der Gaag
for the New Internationalist Co-operative*

Biter bitten

You point out that history is hijacked, used and abused by people to suit their own agendas (*History NI 247*). You say we should have a more sceptical approach which asks: who is selling us this particular line and why? Okay, I've taken your



advice. So what the hell were you doing getting a Croat to write about the history of Serbia and a Pakistani to write about Hinduism?

Anton Gratz
Avonport, Canada

Ten years too late

Congratulations and thank you for your excellent issue on multinationals (*NI 246*). However, as a relatively new subscriber to *NI*, I was appalled to learn that it had been 10 years since an issue was last devoted to the subject. Large corporations own and fund most of the world's media and fund most Northern political parties. It seems to me that their power has increased over the last decade through globalization and the resultant loss of democratic control. The *NI*'s evasion of tackling the power of big business head-on for so long is a depressing mirror of the mainstream media's blindness to the one 'special interest' that really does control our world.

Perhaps optimistically, I think people are becoming aware of the similarities of oppression in the 'developed' and 'developing' world. Publications such as the *NI* can only help this. I just hope I don't have to wait another 10 years before the pernicious impact of multinationals is



The **New Internationalist** welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address is inside the front cover.

explicitly tackled in the *NI*.

Tim Davis
Ecclestone, UK

Ed: We covered Multinationals from another angle in June 1987 by focusing in depth on one corporation, Unilever.

Change from within

While you highlighted the power of multinationals (*NI 246*), you had few solutions to curb their excesses. Perhaps we in the West should take advantage of their globalization – we can buy shares in these companies, attend the meetings which appoint directors, criticize decisions as 'owners' and change the corporate culture. Individual shareholders are often powerless, but if a network of like minds can be created they can circulate information about the companies and ensure that executives are answerable. Or is it more pleasing just to boycott Nestlé?

Ruth Crossley
Bristol, UK

London to New York and then back to Tokyo?

Nominally this market exists to finance international trade but that is true of only about one-twentieth of the transactions. The rest consists of the dealings of currency speculators like George Soros, who is reckoned to have netted a billion dollars by speculating against the pound sterling last autumn. In other words, the scam is 19 times thicker than the good liquor it floats on top of.

Healthy world trade depends on stable currencies but the currency speculators thrive on instability. They are parasites whose operations are putting the world's trading system at risk.

One way of curbing those operations would be to impose a tax on currency dealings. But how is that to be agreed on? Perhaps the IMF should tackle the job.

Peter Little
Henley-on-Thames, UK

Money markets

May I add to what Doug Smith (*NI 246*) writes about the \$700,000 million (some authorities put it even higher) which sloshes around the foreign-exchange markets day by day and 24 hours a day, travelling with the sun from Tokyo to

Misleading figures

The *Update* 'Miracle massage' (*NI 246*) contains inaccuracies and wrongly implies underhand behaviour.

Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) have been calculated for more than 25 years to attempt to give a more accurate picture of

relative national incomes. The shortcomings of 'traditional' or adjusted Gross Domestic Product figures as measures of economic development are widely accepted, but so also is the validity of the use of PPP as conversion factors.

The 'jump' from 18 to 43 per cent of world output does not imply an improvement over time. Rather it is the change as we move from measuring national incomes using GDP to the adjusted figures using PPP. This still means that the Third World is in a much worse position than the First, since its 43 per cent of total output is shared by 84 per cent of the world's population. This implies that the rich world has seven times the income of the poor (including middle-income countries such as Brazil and Saudi Arabia), and the converted figures show that the richest of the rich, Switzerland, has 70 times the income of the poorest of the poor, Ethiopia.

You may criticize the IMF for its 'structural adjustment' policies, but please take care not to mislead about the figures it uses.

Geoff Bright
University College of North Wales, UK

Women Welcome Women

I was disappointed when I read your article about women travelling (*NI 245*). Women Welcome Women is not 'a network providing cheap or free accommodation'. Putting it that way brings in all the people who just want to use other women for their cheap travel.

Women Welcome Women is about friendship. It is about being friends with women from many parts of the world and respecting their culture, their country. It is about learning what makes that country tick from a very privileged position – the home of one of its people.

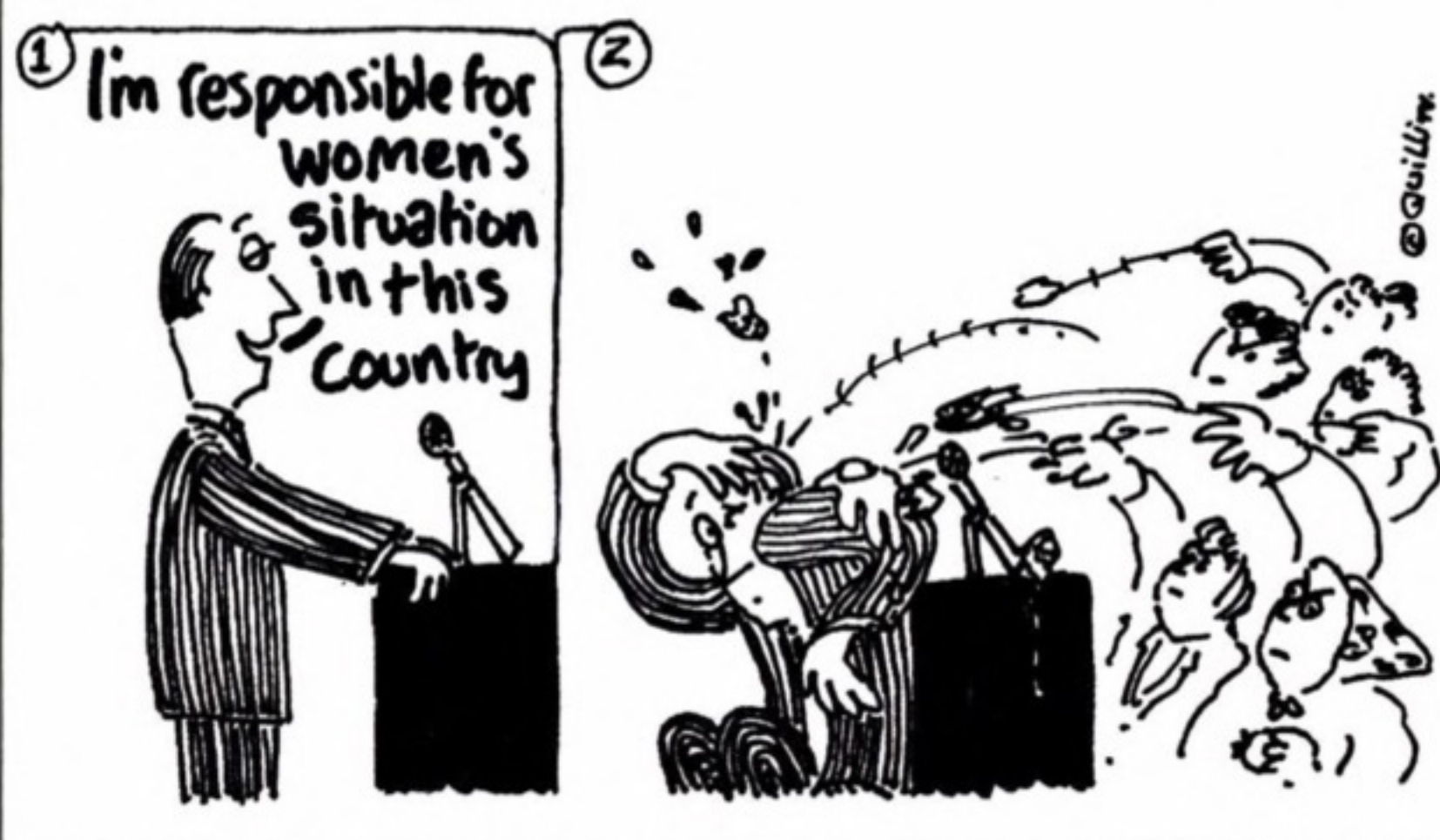
I would suggest that the most valuable reason for travelling is to meet other people, to learn from them, to share their joys and sadnesses, to help spread friendship around the world, and then return home a wiser person.

Frances Alexander
Women Welcome Women
High Wycombe, UK

Men's affairs

In your *Update* in *Tourism* (*NI 245*), David Robie informs us that the cabinet minister responsible for women's affairs in Papua New Guinea is a man. His opposite number in the UK is David Hunt.

Russell Smith
Leatherhead, UK



East Timor ignored

I commend the NI on your excellent issue on human rights (NI 244). However, you failed to include any detailed piece on the continuing tragedy of East Timor, a country which, per capita, has suffered the worst genocide ever. Figures vary, but it is estimated that some 200,000 out of a total population of nearly 700,000 have died as a result of the Indonesian takeover in 1975. Massive human-rights abuses continue unabated; the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili was captured horrifically on film.

You could have included East Timor in your page on Western hypocrisy. Western treatment of Indonesia could have been contrasted with that of Cambodia. The former received and still receives diplomatic and military support from the West, while the latter, until recently, had a comprehensive economic and financial ban imposed on it.

Cormac O'Keeffe
Dublin, Ireland

Visa requirements

The callous attitude of Britain 'imposing a visa requirement' on Bosnians in 1992 and Austrians and Germany in the 1930s ('Beyond these castle walls' NI 244) has also manifested itself in its refusal of visas to *bona fide* tourists in the Third World, particularly young females of marriageable age. Recently my grand-niece was refused a tourist visa by the UK High Commission in Pakistan. She had with her a return ticket, comprehensive holiday insurance, evidence of financial security, a sworn statement signed by me undertaking responsibility for maintaining her and ensuring that she does not get married and leaves the UK on the date shown on her ticket.

She was refused a tourist visa. 'You are of marriageable age and we are not satisfied,' said the High Commission. Satisfied with what! Only the Patricians know.

M Ashraf
Romford, UK

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the NI.

Dupatta or not dupatta

Maria del Nevo explains what happens when Pakistani women dress in a non-conformist way.

MY husband didn't take me to meet his mother until after we had married. This was rather unconventional and I was very nervous about the whole thing. But I needn't have been in the slightest bit worried. She greeted me warmly, smothered me in kisses and continually blessed me throughout the evening.

'I am glad to see that she is wearing Pakistani dress,' she murmured to my husband, and she adjusted my *dupatta* (long scarf), which was the largest one I owned and which was draped rather untidily across my chest.

'Did you ever wear mini-skirts in England?' she asked.

'No,' I said emphatically. 'Good girl,' she said with a fierce nod of the head. 'My own daughter.'

At the time I had thought it a harmless lie. My acceptance into the family had, in fact, depended a lot upon it. But ever since, that lie continues to niggle me and the dress which I had always loved and found comfortable yet elegant, has begun to seem increasingly less so.

Now that summer has come and tempers are prone to fly, I realize that I am not alone in this discomfort.

Beena, a 30-year-old journalist, comes striding into the office every morning, her face flushed and her eyes flashing with anger. 'This damned thing!' she curses loudly, and ripping off her *dupatta* she flings it over the back of her chair.

Our male colleagues glance up from their work for a moment and I murmur sounds of sympathy. We frequently share our experiences, the frustration of walking on the roads in Lahore where men whistle, blow kisses, stick out their tongues and occasionally move just a little too close for comfort. There must be few women who don't have similar stories to tell.

'Things are getting worse here every day,' Beena declares when she has caught her breath. 'It never used to be like this. Men just don't want us to come out of our homes.'

Memories of General Zia's Islamization, when the idea of barring women from driving cars was even discussed, are still vivid. But on the surface things do seem to be changing for the better. Women are no longer restricted to 'acceptable professions' like teaching. They are appearing as lawyers, doctors, in banks, in the media and in big business.

But, as Beena frequently points out, women still can't walk down the street to work without being harassed. They still have to conform by wearing the *dupatta*.

Neelam, another colleague, often does leave

hers at home. But as a result she faces numerous unpleasant situations when moving around Lahore. She is from a more conservative home than Beena, who was brought up in Karachi and did her higher education overseas. And unlike Beena, who chose her own husband, Neelam's parents would like to arrange her marriage for her. 'But,' she states, 'I don't want to live a life of slavery like my mother. And if I ever do get married it'll never be to a Pakistani man.' But Neelam has to have a lot of courage to live the life she has chosen for herself.

'One day,' she tells me, 'I was walking to work. This man – I think he was a *maulvi* (priest) – was cycling by. He stopped when he saw me and shouted: "Woman! Where is your *dupatta*?" I was so angry, and asked him why he was even looking my way. Then he was embarrassed. "No, no," he said, "I am only saying this because I am like your father." So I told him that one father was enough for me, and he cycled away!'

The *dupatta* is in fact an integral part of a Pakistani woman's dress, and even in the confines of their homes, women can be seen adjust-

ing it, slipping it over their heads at prayer time or when a man enters the room, without even a second thought. Most women would not feel fully clothed without it.

But essentially it is the symbol of modesty and this is why, in a society where a family's honour is dependent upon a woman's virtue, the *dupatta* has become an issue for women like Beena and Neelam who see it as fundamental to their struggle for emancipation.

Last year in nearby Faisalabad the Education Department advised young girls and women to cover their heads when travelling to and from schools so as to prevent sexual harassment on the roads. There was an uproar when the news reached our office.

'See what we are up against!' cried an outraged Beena. 'If we are raped or assaulted then we are to blame for not covering our heads!'

I think I realize now how women are the victims of a cruel, yet very subtle, form of emotional blackmail, and how a virtue like modesty is used against them to reinforce the indestructibility of a patriarchal system. Perhaps this is because I am no longer standing as a spectator on the periphery of a culture.

Maria del Nevo is a former NI staff member who has been living and working in Lahore. Next month will see the start of a new *Letter From Lagos* by Elizabeth Obadina.



ILLUSTRATION: MIRIAM MCCURDY



Back to the drawing board

The war on education



BARBENE KLASS / PANOS

Education once seemed like the magic solution to all the world's problems. Now children are dropping out of school, governments are savaging spending and big business is taking over.

Nikki van der Gaag looks for light at the end of the tunnel.

A CHILD stands in a queue in China's Hubei province. He waits patiently for his turn, drumming his fingers nervously on the wall. Finally he enters a blue door. Two hours later he comes out, looking a little pale, but clutching the precious reward for his travails in his hand. An exam? Some kind of test? No. He has been giving blood – blood which will help to pay the school fees that his parents can no longer afford.

Ten-year-old Ibrahim Sheikh runs the four kilometres to his home in Wagberi, in north-eastern Kenya. He is unable to hide his excitement. With shining eyes, he presents his mother with his end-of-year class placing – Number One. His mother smiles proudly at him. But her smile hides the anxiety of knowing that this year she has

not been able to afford his school uniform – next year she may not be able to afford to send him to school.

US teenager Matt Johnston trudges through the snow in Kalkaska, Michigan. It is 7.00am on a cold March morning and he is off to an extra mathematics class. It may be the last of the academic year. The local school authorities, faced with a \$1.5 million shortfall in their \$8.5 million budget, have decided to run a seven-month year instead of cutting back in other ways. So summer for Matt begins in March.

There is a crisis in education. A crisis that is hitting not just the poorest countries and the poorest schools, but can be seen everywhere, from China to Kenya and from the US to Uganda.

It was not always so. Belief in the

elixir of universal education used to be widespread. And it was backed up by government money. From the 1950s on, education was something worth investing in, particularly for poorer countries. In the 1960s and 1970s, spending on education rose steadily. More children were educated, more women learned to read and write, and innovative ways of teaching were pioneered in schools. Studies proved that education, especially for women, led to higher productivity, better family health and smaller families. Parents believed that by giving their children an education they were giving them a chance to escape the cycle of poverty. Education was the only way out of the ghetto.

This seemed true even in a global sense: newly independent countries had an

idealistic sense of education as the key to development. As one of the Third World's first great leaders, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, told the first issue of *The Internationalist* back in 1970: 'Education is not a way of escaping the country's poverty. It is a way of fighting it.'

Then came the 1980s. Recession and structural adjustment – the economic squeeze imposed on poor countries by the IMF – meant that governments worldwide looked more closely at what they spent. And education was a large part of most governments' budget. Politicians began counting their pennies, effectively weighing up who should get an education and who should not. They reassessed education's place in the scheme of things and found it wanting. So they reduced teachers' salaries. They increased class sizes. They pared to a minimum the amounts spent on repairs to school buildings, on books and equipment.

To some extent this was inevitable: in straitened economic times governments needed to get as much for their money as they could. And in many cases education was in need of reform. But all too often this reform was linked to a right-wing view asserting a market model of education. As soon as education becomes a market then it becomes something available only to those who can afford it – and puts society's most vulnerable groups at an even greater disadvantage. In these circumstances if you are poor, or black, if you have a disability or learning difficulty, if your country has been disrupted by war, if you are a girl rather than a boy, and particularly if you combine any of these elements, then your chances of not completing school are high indeed. Your chances are better if you live in the North rather than the South, but even then your education is more likely to be guaranteed if you are white and middle-class.

The politics of this are clear. Such segregated education fits in well with right-wing philosophies which argue that education is to fit every 'man (sic) for his proper place

in society'. In the words of the nineteenth-century hymn: 'The rich man in his castle, the poor man at the gate, God made them high and lowly, And ordered their estate'. The 'rich man' who can afford to pay for his children's education will ensure that they find their 'proper place' in society, while the children of the 'poor man' are likely to lose out on any education at all; to remain forever begging at the gate.

The global rhetoric, of course, is unchanged. In 1990 the World Conference on Education in Jomtien, Thailand, reaffirmed the importance of education for all, calling for universal education by the year 2000. Three years later, this goal still seems a long way off. There are 900 million people in the world today who cannot read

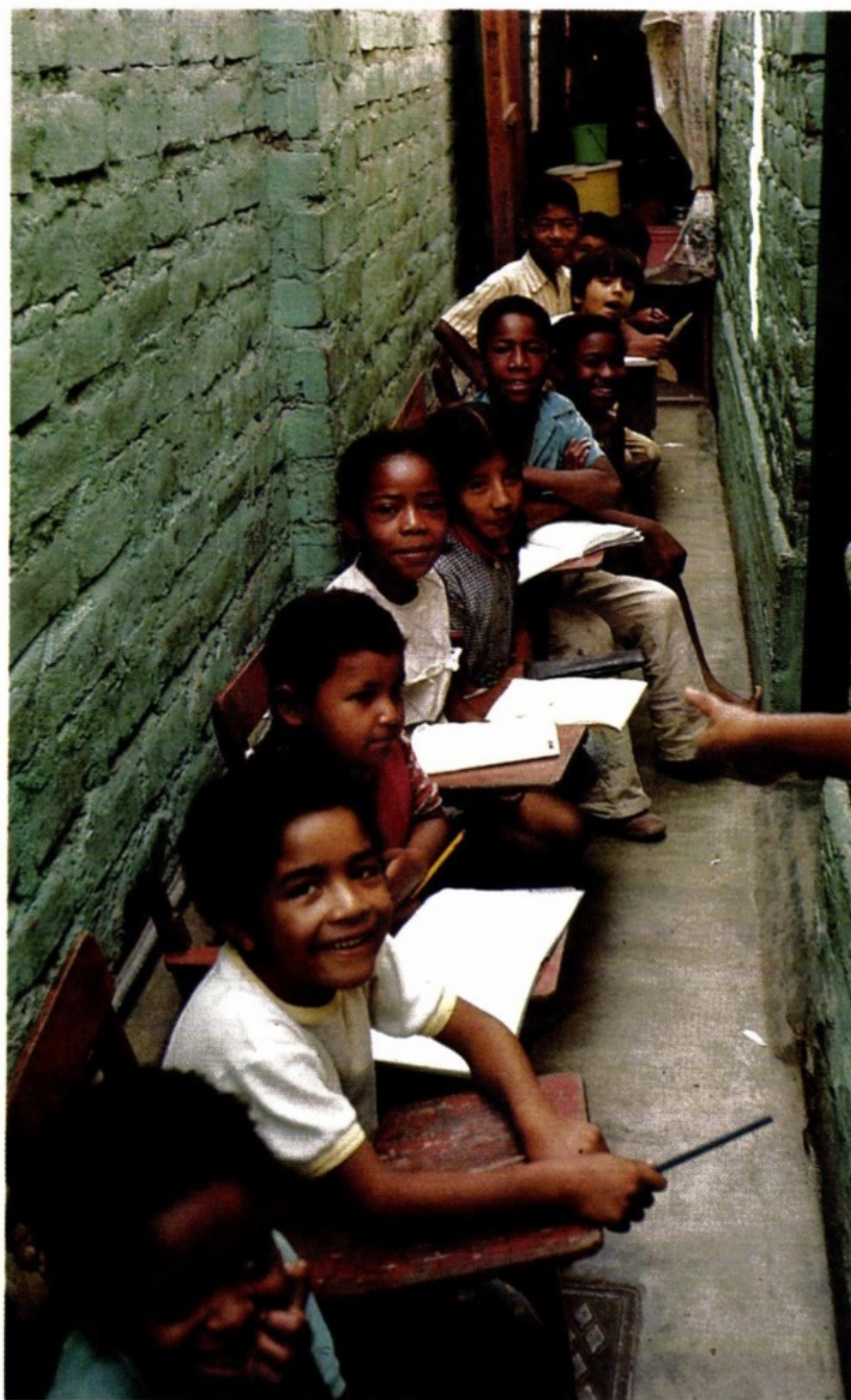
and write. Two-thirds of them are women. There are an estimated 400 million schoolchildren who will never get the chance to have an education. And although the amount of money spent on education increases each year, it is never enough to cover costs for the existing population, let alone to provide for those yet unborn.

The goal of education for all would have seemed much more attainable had the countries of the South not been hit so hard in the 1980s by debt and structural adjustment. Government income dropped due to falling prices on the world market for raw materials. And as public spending was cut, so classrooms crumbled. Primary student numbers declined in roughly one out of five developing countries. Teachers' salaries no longer gave them a decent standard of living. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa were the worst hit, with education expenditure cut by 30 per cent in the early 1980s. Inflation and high unemployment exacerbated the problem.

Today, although 90 per cent of children in developing countries start primary school, up to half drop out before completing four years. They leave because their parents need them to work, or because their families have to pay too high a price to keep them in school.

Girls in particular are the first to be kept at home, where they can be useful around the house. This is especially true if, despite all the sacrifices families have made to keep their children in school, educational qualifications are no longer a guarantee of a job.

This is in marked contrast to the improvements in earlier decades. In Costa Rica, for example, the constitution sets down the right to education for all; it also has the highest literacy rate in the region. Between 1950 and 1980 education provision was consistently expanding. But during that time, the country had also incurred the highest level of per-capita debt in Latin America. In 1981, the Government was given a loan from the IMF. But there were conditions. Conditions which meant



The space to learn – a corridor classroom in India; (facing page) Writing on the wall: but for this child in Bangladesh there is hope.

OXFAM

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KEYNOTE

that less had to be spent on items such as health and education. By 1986 education expenditure had fallen to 4.3 per cent of GDP from its high point of 6.0 per cent.

The story is a complex one but its effects on education are stark. Fewer children are enrolling in school – and more and more are dropping out. In 1986, a document from the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education stated: 'In recent months, the physical condition of schools and equipment has deteriorated alarmingly, due to lack of maintenance, and also due to lack of basic expenditure on light, water, security guards, chalk, stationery and books... staff members who provide technical and administrative support... are semi-paralysed in their work by lack of transport, of travel allowances, petrol and educational materials.'

This could stand as an assessment of education in most countries of the South during the 1980s.

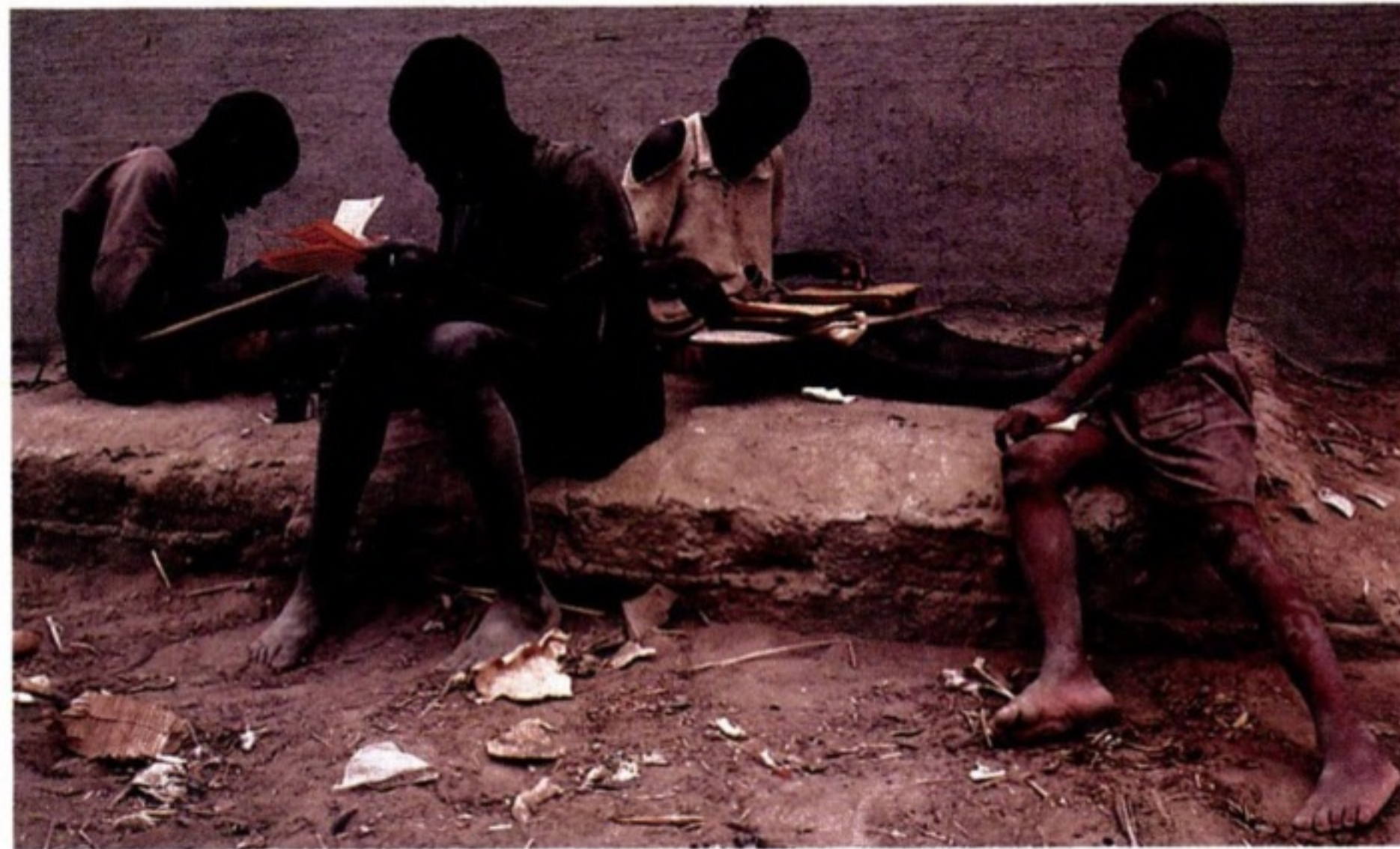
We in the North are also witnessing cutbacks. We might find it hard to comprehend the deluge of government statistics about increased spending, but anyone who talks to a teacher or walks into a school knows that education in the North is also in decline. Spending has ostensibly continued to rise, with declines being masked by a huge rise in the numbers in tertiary education, and the amounts spent on restructuring the curriculum. And there are paradoxes. Some schools are doing very nicely, thank you. Others are being forced to increase class sizes; they are short of books and equipment, and sometimes even paper. Or, like the schools in Kalkaska, they are looking for radical ways to save money. In the US local taxes and state aid pay 40 per cent of the education budget. This means that schools in low-income districts are penalized. In Illinois, one such district argued that it

could never raise sufficient funds and voted simply to shut down its eight schools.

Market forces have not only affected education provision: they are also entering the classroom and shaping children's development. Children are now being prepared for the world of competition; a world in which they do battle against others for that crucial test, that particular job. Subjects that are seen as peripheral – those which help to develop a child into a fully-rounded personality – give way to subjects which develop technical and vocational skills. And those children who are seen not to possess those skills are simply thrown aside. Once again

its educational programme with 22 experimental schools. In the first five years it opened over 6,000 schools, mainly for the children of the poor and the landless. And Sayeeda Anis, a BRAC programme officer, hopes that by 1998 there will be 100,000.

Around 70 per cent of the children are girls, part of a deliberate policy to encourage girls' education. The BRAC schools provide three years of basic education, including literacy, numeracy and social studies, for approximately \$15 per child per year. Classes are small, and the timetable and school year fit in with the farming seasons. So far over 90 per cent of BRAC's pupils



Worlds apart within one continent: reading despite their rags in Mali; taking the measure in Somalia.



PHOTOS: CLAUDE SAUVAGEOT

CLAUDE SAUVAGEOT



Reading unlocks the door to other worlds: serious study in France.

have gone on to join the national primary education system. Most of these children would never normally have gone to school.

BRAC exemplifies five key elements for successful education. It is affordable. It is accessible, so that parents do not fear to send their girl children and the journey is not arduous. It is appropriate to the needs of the girl or boy, woman or man, who is learning. It is seen as essential to their well-being. And, crucially, it is fun. For we learn best when we are involved and enjoying ourselves.

Teachers and communities in the North have recognized this as well, and are struggling to find new and effective ways of teaching and learning. This becomes more and more difficult when money is scarce, and when testing and assessment procedures restrict teachers' scope within the curriculum. But there are still many initiatives, both inside and outside state systems, which are a testament to an education that we can all believe in.

The development-education network which operates from Osaka to Ottawa, from Manchester to Melbourne, is one such. In the UK, for example, the number of development-education centres, often run on a voluntary basis, has tripled in the last ten years and this movement has successfully lobbied the UK Government to include global issues in the curriculum. All over the rich world children are routinely learning more about development issues than was the case 20 years ago – learning to

think in terms of one interconnected world. That is an achievement worth defending – and it will need defending against the depredations of the market onslaught.

We know that there are thousands of people who care enough to get involved. We know also that the content of education is as important as the cost. Paulo Freire, the populist Brazilian educator, was absolutely clear about what this content should be: 'Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality, or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion'. If we believe in the quality of such 'creative discussion', then we must ensure that we campaign for an education which liberates all children to learn; to become active and participating members of society.

The goal of education for all is also worth fighting for. We know that an extra two or three per cent of GDP spent on education will make a huge difference to what happens to a country and its people a generation from now – if only debt and the IMF's stringent terms would allow governments to spend it. We must fight for an education where State and Community together forge schools that the people can afford. Education for all by the year 2000 is an achievable goal. We are three-quarters of the way there. Let us not, through short-sighted cutbacks or misguided politics, fail to take that last step. ■

1 Education in the developing world, Sarah Graham-Brown (Longman 1991).

A MEMORANDUM FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN EDUCATION

1. Questions

Never stop asking unanswerable questions. What is the sound of one hand clapping? Which comes first – personal change or structural?

2. Avoiding burnout

You have a duty to take care of yourself; and your self includes your body (for the body is not just a thing which carries your head around), and also your spirit (which is not just that strange place you sometimes visit, without being adequately consulted, in your dreams).

3. Diversity is a value

Let a thousand powers loom, a thousand gadflies bite, a thousand micro-climates flow.

4. Suffer the little ones

The periphery is beautiful, small is reliable. Small may be trusted, cherished, nourished.

5. Images are reality

In the shaping of images of our being, of our world, of our being-in-the-world, we are part of evolutions' creativity and unfolding, we are shaping evolution's creativity and unfolding, we are shaping evolution itself.

6. Good places for kids

Schools can be arenas for the unfolding of selves – of bodies, of souls. They are not inherently destructive, nor embarrassingly irrelevant. Schools are good places, though not the only good places, on earth to be.

7. Say yes

Cherish what you touch, love where you tread, embrace and delight in the person you are with.

8. Nothing ever finishes

Unfolding is endless. A millennium doesn't finish, nor does a culture, nor a project, nor a life, nor a love, nor a conference, nor a lecture, nor an essay. Everything, everything everywhere, is always unfini

By Robin Richardson, from his book *Daring to be teacher* (Trentham 1990).

Linocut by Peter Beney (14) for the Art and Development project in London, UK. The sun represents South Africa – the bird represents peace and freedom.



The sharks move in

Burger King Academies, millions of schoolchildren required to sit through video ads for chocolate bars – and this is only the beginning.

Jonathan Kozol reports on the grand designs of the entrepreneurs who are taking over US education.

A GROWING bunch of entrepreneurs,' *The New York Times* reported in a 1991 education supplement, 'are suggesting that unabashed capitalism can succeed' in the delivery of education 'where bureaucracy and altruism have failed.' If private corporations can achieve what government cannot, the *Times* went on, 'why should they not make money in the process?'

A number of corporations are now setting out to do exactly that. Burger King has opened 'Burger King Academies', fully accredited quasi-private high schools, in 14 cities in the US, and are planning to open another in the UK, in London's East End. IBM and Apple are contemplating the idea of starting schools for profit too. Educational Alternatives, a profit-making firm in Minneapolis, now runs a public school for profit in Miami and recently won contracts to run public schools in Baltimore and Duluth. 'It's open season on marketing,' says the corporation's president.

But the most ambitious plans to date for profit-making schools are those announced in May 1991 by Chris Whittle, founder and chair of Whittle Communications, a publisher of upmarket consumer-orientated magazines. Whittle has already pioneered the sale of television news-and-advertising packages to public schools. His commercials for Snickers, Burger King and other products are shown in 10,000 schools and are required viewing for almost eight million students daily. Under the contract that school districts sign, 90 per cent of the children in a school must watch the program 90 per cent of the time, each of the programs must be watched in its entirety, a show cannot be interrupted

and the teacher does not have the right to turn it off. In return for 12 minutes of students' time each day, schools get the loan of a satellite dish and TV sets for each classroom. An advertiser's dream – and an income for Whittle of \$630,000 a day.

Whittle's 'Edison Project' carries all this a great deal further. By 1996, 200 new profit-making schools will be open, and as many as 1,000 schools serving two million children are

will be granted scholarships, although the kids on scholarships will, for the most part, be in separate schools from those who pay. In an inner-city school, he says, 95 per cent of the kids will be on scholarship, while in suburban settings it may only be one per cent. Whittle appears untroubled by the certainty that he is thereby guaranteeing segregated schooling.

Although Whittle promises he will not be selective in admissions, he does not

address the likelihood that those who seek and win admission to his schools will be self-selecting. His promise, furthermore, is one he may well circumvent by simple strategies like opting not to offer services for kids with special needs.

Once a handful of Whittle's schools exist – and, with the corporate funds he has available, the first schools he opens are likely to be dazzling creations – they may well be exploited as a selling point for vouchers. Parents, he says, who already pay 'tax

From burgers to burghers:
the two faces of Burger King



foreseen within the next ten years. Although Whittle is the front, the media conglomerate Time Warner holds 38 per cent of the stock in the project, with an option to obtain another 30 per cent. And another one-quarter of the stock is held by Associated Newspapers in the UK.

The schools will charge tuition fees of \$5,500 – roughly the same as the national average spent per pupil in the public schools. Whittle proposes saving on teachers' salaries by using volunteers, classroom aides and computerized instruction, and he proposes using the students themselves to do some of the work of school custodians. One-fifth of the students

dollars' for the public schools, 'are going to have to make a decision about whether they want to pay twice'. Whittle undoubtedly hopes that the parents of the children he enrolls – and the favourable press he orchestrates – will generate a national demand for the diversion of tax money into private education.

Under the entrepreneurial model Whittle represents, public schools will of course be obliged to advertise in order to compete with the private sector's marketing, causing a diversion of scarce funds from teaching into selling. This is, moreover, a competition that public educators, having neither marketing experience nor capital, are unlikely to win. With public education starved of funds and with many public

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Blackboards versus megabytes (above and below): business-run schools will widen the gulf.

schools in disrepair, Whittle's initial boutique offerings are likely to appear spectacular by comparison.

If the goals of Whittle should be realized, what might education some day look like in America? A vivid answer is given by John Chubb, a proponent of vouchers who has now been added to Whittle's payroll. Public schools, he has written, 'must take whoever walks in through the door'. As a result, 'they do not have the luxury of being able to select' the students 'who may

be 'best suited' to their goals. A private school, by contrast, has the right to keep out students who may need 'more slowly paced instruction'. Under a voucher system, he says, instead of public schools that try to serve a large diversity of students in one setting, we would see 'a constellation' of 'different schools serving different kinds of students differently'. Such schools, he suggests, 'might target their appeals' to 'chosen segments' of the population.

Excellence in public schools, says

Chubb, is undermined because 'so many of their students come from families that put little or no emphasis on education'. The virtue of the voucher-funded schools that he proposes, Chubb asserts, is that, like private schools today, they would be attractive to the kinds of kids whose parents are 'informed', 'supportive' and 'encourage education'. Children of the other kind of parents – 'parents who may cause problems' – are, he says, 'the ones most likely to drop out'.

What would happen to these children? 'Larger numbers of specialized schools', he claims, would soon emerge and would presumably address the needs of children from such families. Strip away the fancy language here and we are looking at a social Darwinist scenario, a triage operation that will filter off the fortunate and leave the rest in schools where children of the 'better' parents do not need to see them.

Unlike his employer, Chubb is honest to a fault. If his goals should some day be achieved, what we have known as public education will be granted a new definition and a different role in our society. What is now regarded as a right will come to be seen as just one more commercial product – or, more properly, a line of differentiated products. Whatever common bonds still hold together cities and communities are likely to be weakened or dissolved. As parents scramble to get children into one of Whittle's schools – or, for that matter,

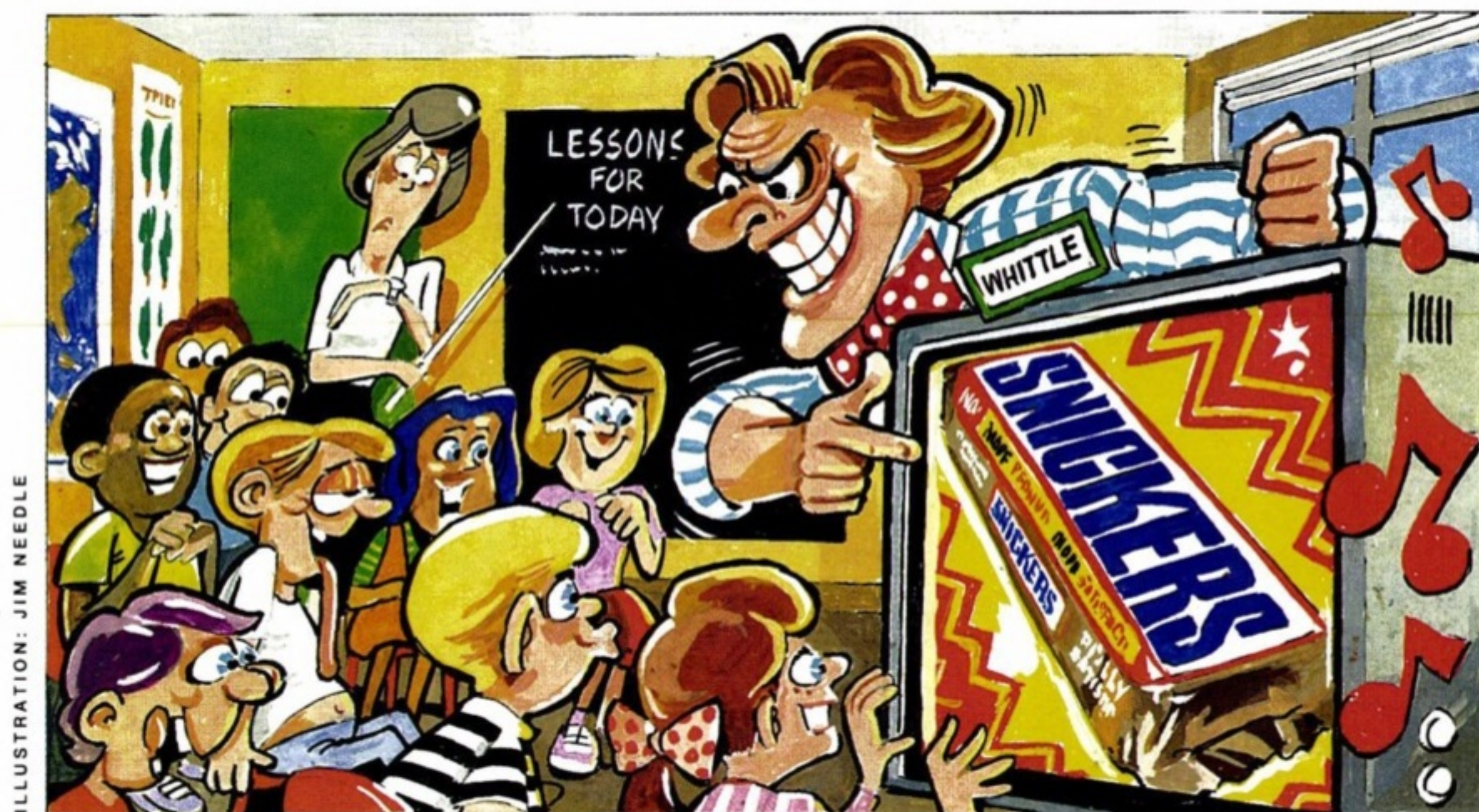
any other 'voucher school' – they will by necessity view almost



PHOTOS: CHIASSON / LIAISON

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schools' tell me with some confidence: 'We're not afraid of people such as Whittle. We have something special here that he can't duplicate.' I don't think they understand the forces they are facing. No matter what the 'special' thing they do, they cannot do it with the flair and promotional momentum that a massive private company can generate, nor can they profit from the same economies of scale. Business can and will construct dramatic new school buildings, set up space-age science and computer centers, target specific clienteles. Anything progressives have that is unique can be appropriated (even if adulterated) and repackaged to look better in commercial form. Their pedagogy, where it seems of interest to the public, can be copied and reprocessed to provide a Whittle school with a soupçon of liberal inventiveness and charm. Their teachers can be weaned away by better salaries. Their administrators can be bought away as well. Business can also mouth the words of progressive educationalists like Paulo Freire as frequently as we do.

The last thing I want is to create divisiveness among progressive educators, who are already embattled in their efforts at reform. Many of the innovations they have tried to introduce in public education – local school autonomy, empowerment of parents – are enormously important. I do, however, feel uneasy at the risks involved when people I admire end up, even quite unwillingly, helping to propel the juggernaut that Whittle and others are riding. I don't know exactly how we can avoid this, but I think we should be far more circumspect.

Whittle has shown how easily resistance on the part of local citizens can be defeated by a mixture of doublespeak and savvy. Any man who, in a mere three years, was able to win the power to indoctrinate eight million kids with advertising every day is likely to do very well in breaking open the next market.

Whittle's enterprise, moreover, may be only the beginning. With the end of the Cold War and the scaling back of military spending, military-industrial companies like Honeywell may well shift their horizons and start to look at education as an even better realm than war for future 'penetration'. An education-industrial complex cannot fail to represent a tempting prospect.

'A radical reprivatizing of the public realm is now well under way,' notes Pennsylvania State University Professor Henry Giroux. Strategists at corporate thinktanks are already mobilizing their resources for the next encounter. If we are serious, we should be mobilizing too. ■

Jonathan Kozol is a prominent US educationalist and the author of *Savage Inequalities*. This article originally appeared in *The Nation*.

every other parent as a rival. They will feel no obligation to raise tax-support for public schools attended by their neighbours' children. Instead of fighting for systematic excellence and equity for all, we will have taught them to advance their own kids – whatever the cost to other people's children.

To the extent that liberal education writers have demurred at Whittle's plans, they have focused chiefly on the dangers of commercialism in the classroom. But the commercial products Whittle sells may be far less pernicious than his non-commercial products: an attitude, a set of values, a body of political beliefs as well. Whittle disclaims any wish to sell his ideologies to children. He speaks of education as a strictly neutral and mechanical experience. As every teacher knows, however, schools are never neutral. Consciously or not, they shape the soul and style of the future adult population.

When business enters education, therefore, it sells something more important than the brand names of its products. It sells a way of looking at the world and at oneself. It sells predictability instead of critical capacities. It sells a circumscribed, job-specific utility. 'I'm in the business,' says Elaine Mosley, the principal of a corporate-sponsored high school in Chicago, 'of developing minds to meet a market demand.'

The literature of school reform now being churned out by the private sector is unsentimental and straightforward on these matters. Students are described and valued not as children but as 'workers'. They are seen as future 'assets' or 'productive units' – or else, failing that, as pint-sized human deficits who threaten our productive capacities – but not as human beings who have value in themselves. The package of skills the child learns, or doesn't learn, is called the 'product' of the school. Sometimes the child is referred to as 'the product'. A heightened emphasis on testing is one logical result of this utilitarian

approach and promises a future in which 'product testing' of commodities called 'students' will be more and more pronounced.

When wedded to the reach and power of a firm such as Time Warner, a school's potential for reshaping the entire world view is almost unlimited. One hesitates to contemplate the possibilities when schools, movies, books, magazines and cable-system offerings are governed, produced and orchestrated by a single corporate directorate. Do we really want to give this kind of power over our children to Chris Whittle or others like him?

Ironically, the road that leads to Whittle's enterprise may have been paved to a degree by liberals who have supported the idea of market choice and competition in the public schools while reassuring us that we can ward off any threat of private-school vouchers. In effect, they have been saying 'It will go thus far – and no farther'.

I see no reason why. Once we accept the ideology of competition as the engine of reform, we will be hard pressed to say why only certain people ought to be allowed to be competitors. If 'parental opinion' is to be the pedagogic gospel, who is to say which options are to be permitted and which will be disallowed? Already ideologues at places like the Heritage Foundation are making just this argument: If choice is good, who are you to draw the line at choices only you approve of? Right-wing intellectuals who make this point are better debaters than most educators on the left; they are also infinitely more successful at encapsulating their ideas and selling them to politicians and the public. They shrewdly see the drive for public schools of choice as an initial thrust – inadequate but tolerable for now – in a campaign that will issue in an unfettered market system.

Old friends of mine in the 'alternative

TEN years ago, most Maori children in Aotearoa/New Zealand went to non-Maori, or *pakeha* schools. Maori language was moving towards extinction: it had been banned in all New Zealand schools as long ago as 1905. Maori children were suffering from loss of self-esteem and in some cases anti-social behaviour. A feeling of alienation coupled with resentment and anger saw many young Maori drop out because they couldn't survive in the system.

Today Maori have stopped looking to the State for a solution. They have looked for their own answers and have at last begun to determine their own future.

An important part of this has been the establishment of Maori schools. It is just over a decade since the first five *Te Kohanga Reo* (Language Nests) were established as a pilot scheme. These schools catered for children up to five years old. They taught only in the Maori language and, just as importantly, they taught the Maori culture. Iritana Tawhiwhirangi, the general manager of the Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Board says that this gave the Maori hope. 'We believed that total immersion was the only way to go. Without the language we couldn't address the culture in its entirety. We wanted our *mokopuna* (children) to speak to us in our own language.'

The benefits of Te Kohanga Reo were soon evident among Maori. Within one year of the five pilot centres being established, 112 were set up throughout Aotearoa. Tawhiwhirangi says there are now more than 800 in operation, and more are planned.

But other problems soon became apparent. When children left the Kohanga Reo environment and entered mainstream education at the age of five, they lost their Maori language within three weeks. Neither this, nor their culture, were taught in the *pakeha* system, which was based on very different cultures and espoused the virtues of rugged individualism and competitiveness. The effects on the children were devastating. They were still dropping out of school as the *pakeha* system continued to fail them.

It wasn't long before Maori primary schools were being advocated. The first *Kura Kaupapa Maori* opened in Auckland in the late 1980s. All teaching, including mathematics and science, is done in the Maori language. English is taught, but through the medium of Maori. *Karakia* (prayer) is said at the start and end of each school day and reflects a traditional part of Maori life. New children are given a 'keeper' to be with them when they start, who helps them adapt to the new environment. It is not a requirement for children entering the school to be of Maori descent, but children should have a commitment to Maori language and culture and have come from a Kohanga Reo. The principal of the

Kura Whakapumau i te reo Tuuturu*

**the school has retained our ancient language*

All over the world indigenous peoples whose cultures are under threat are rallying by teaching children in their traditional language.

Glenn Inwood shows how a revival of Maori education in Aotearoa/New Zealand could enrich the whole community.



NEW ZEALAND TOURIST BOARD

Springs of renewal: will the new generation of Maori speak their own language?

Kura Kaupapa Maori in Christchurch, Kulei Latimer, says that children who were deemed failures in mainstream education were 'excelling' at the Maori school. Her co-principal, Tania Fitzpatrick, says: 'We are producing children who will be great Maori leaders; a whole new generation of Maori that we once had.'

The schools are run in a different way from *pakeha* schools. The members of the school board are all parents, and they are answerable to the wider community. This has led to problems with the Ministry of Education, which says that schools have to meet certain requirements before being funded.

But Iritana Tawhiwhirangi maintains that despite initial problems, the setting up of such schools is a sign of change. 'We believe there is a mood of joy and hope and ownership in a way that has not moved

Maori before.* She hopes that eventually the *pakeha* New Zealanders will bring their children to *Kura Kaupapa* schools, to the enrichment of the whole community. The ultimate aim is for more mainstream schools, including high schools and universities, to accept the Maori culture, not just to teach it, but to become part of it. 'I have a lot more hope for Aotearoa than I did ten years ago. We will see the change in the country when the children come through the Maori schools. Another language and culture will benefit all children, whether Maori or *pakeha*.'

Her hope is given added urgency by the fact that more than one-third of the population of Aotearoa/New Zealand will be of Maori or Pacific Island descent by the year 2020.

Glenn Inwood is a journalist living in Christchurch. He is of Tuhoe and Ngati Kahunga descent.

the taste of th

MINISTER FOR EXAMS

When I was a child I sat an exam.
This test was so simple
There was no way I could fail.

Q1. Describe the taste of the moon.

It tastes like Creation I wrote,
it has the flavour of starlight.

Q2. What colour is Love?

Love is the colour of the water a man
lost in the desert finds, I wrote.

Q3. Why do snowflakes melt?

I wrote, they melt because they fall
on to the warm tongue of God.

There were other questions.
They were as simple.

I described the grief of Adam
when he was expelled from Eden.
I wrote down the exact weight of
an elephant's dream

Yet today, many years later,
for my living I sweep the streets
or clean out the toilets of the fat
hotels.

Why? Because constantly I failed
my exams.
Why? Well, let me set a test.

Q1. How large is a child's
imagination?

Q2. How shallow is the soul of the
Minister for Exams?

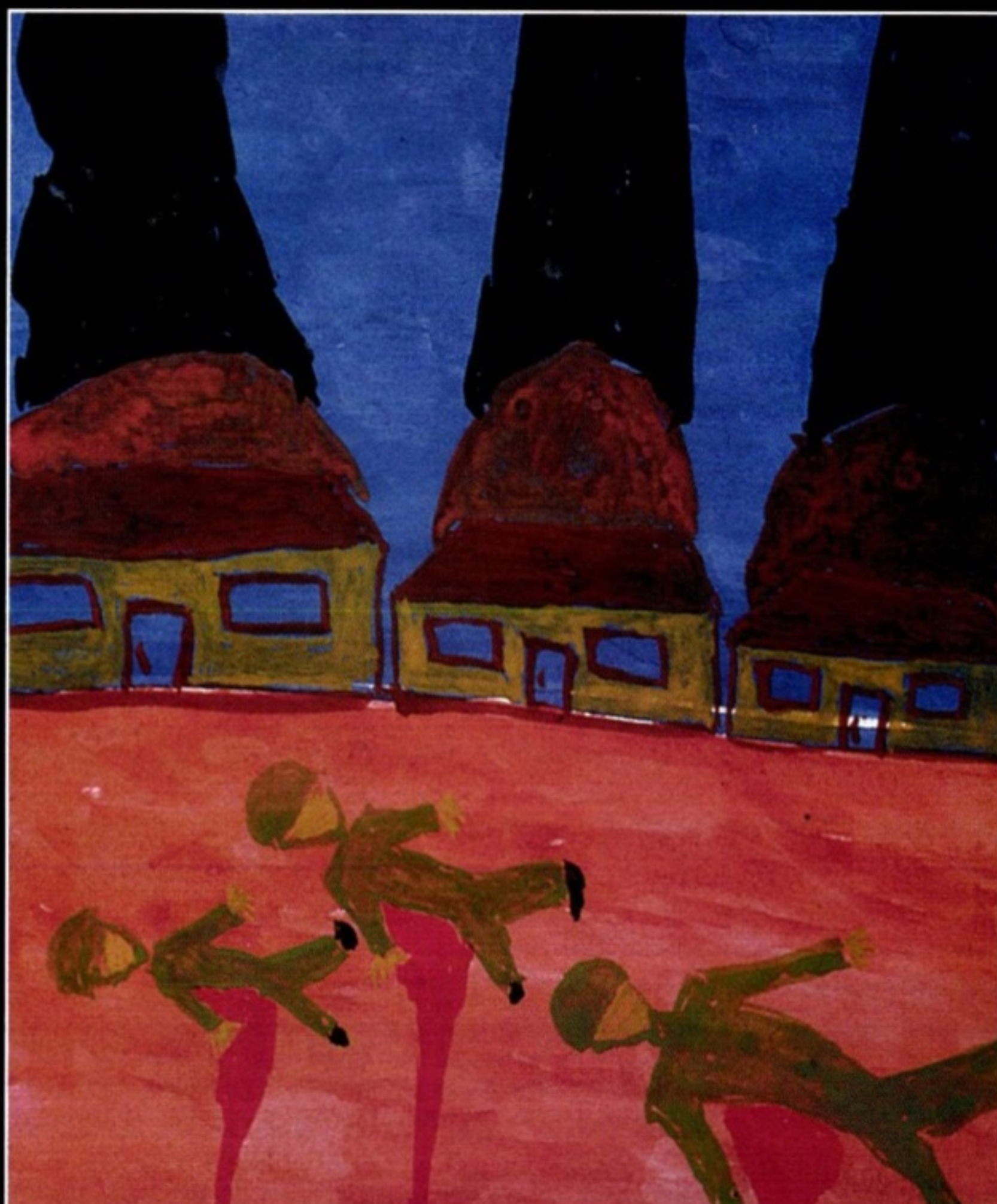
Brian Patten



the moon



Top left: 'Playtime' by Heidi Pollet (age 6) Belgium. Top right: 'The Mosque' by Sherina Ibrahim Mohammed (9) United Arab Emirates. Bottom row: 'A house, a sun, a river' by Kanak Singh (12), MC Boys Middle School, New Delhi, India; 'Portrait of a Sadhu' by Sreyshi Pal Chowduri (8) Calcutta, India; 'Destruction of my town' by a Vietnamese child (12) after the Têt Offensive.



PHOTOS: GEOFF SAYER / OXFAM



Peanuts and prayers

The right to free schooling is being eroded all over the world. Geoff Sayer reports from East Africa, where parents are having to make ever greater sacrifices to secure an education for their children.

'I'm weak from digging our land for fees. I don't see how I'll ever get my children through primary school.' Florence Muhindo conceded a moment's despair as we picked our way through the rain-drenched coffee bushes growing behind her hillside home: 'I've seven children in primary school and Lucy in secondary. It's becoming impossible to keep them there. We negotiated with the headmistress last week so the children could continue. She said she'd wait a while for payment. Lucy was sent home from Kinyamaseke Secondary School last week because we hadn't paid for her first term.'

Across the valley the steep foothills of Uganda's Ruwenzori Mountains presented a patchwork of banana plantations, coffee gardens, maize plots and elephant-grass terracing that mirrored the fertility of Florence's two-hectare farm. Apart from bananas, eaten as a savoury dish, the staple

Wangoi in Nairobi wants to go back to school (above); Class without classroom: Mpasana School in Uganda's Kibale district (right).

foods are beans, maize, millet, groundnuts and sweet potatoes. Some farmers cultivate second plots on the lower lands sloping down towards Lakes George and Edward, growing cotton on the drier soils. Families grow most of their own food as well – like most other East African countries, the cash economy is far less important than it is in the rich world. For many basic commodities, families exist without money. They grow, they exchange, they barter. But school fees have to be paid in cash.

Florence's family are not poor. They grow almost all the food they eat, and some to sell. Cotton and coffee bring in further

cash. Florence has always found time to continue her work as a health volunteer in her village. Four of her children are orphans that she has adopted. But for the first time she is finding that she can't afford to refer her children to Kagando Hospital for treatment, or to pay the fees necessary for them to continue at school. These are higher for each grade, and have risen enormously over the last few years.

'The fees for the primary children at Kinyamaseke have doubled in the last year,

and are ten times what they were in 1990/91. Lucy's fees in the first class at secondary school cost three-quarters of what we earn during a good coffee harvest.'

Florence has no means of increasing her income to meet rising charges for school fees and health care. The Ugandan Government has struggled to maintain the prices paid to farmers for coffee and cotton, liberalizing markets and abandoning the tax on coffee exports which produced a third of government revenue in the late 1980s. But



EDUCATION

UGANDA



world prices have fallen relentlessly. In real terms coffee is fetching only about half of its 1986 value (and Uganda depends on coffee for over 70 per cent of its foreign earnings). Like parents everywhere in Uganda, Florence and her husband Josia will have to choose which of their children will be allowed the luxury of school.

Despite her difficulties, Florence's expectations of schooling remain high: 'Education is terribly important. It always helps a person to be better... to be useful in society as well as to their family. The children have to go to school if they're to develop. Of course it also gives them a better chance to get a job – it's depressing if someone has a good education and can't find a job.'

The government of the National Revolutionary Movement (NRM) which came to power in 1986 has taken a more pragmatic line than other East African governments, acknowledging from the start that it would be depending on parents to finance schooling. Fees are set by parents themselves through an elected Parent-Teacher Association; these provide about 40 per cent of teachers' pay and help to finance the maintenance of school buildings. Without this tax-free supplement to their government salaries, teachers simply could not survive. They would be left in the situation of their colleagues in Tanzania – teaching huge classes without the most basic resources, and often forced to hold down two jobs or sell tuition privately to those who can afford it.

Despite the 'extra' money, schools and teachers are struggling. Dorothy Policeapuuli, headteacher at the local primary school, expressed her frustration: 'We have only 438 pupils enrolled this year compared with 560 in 1992. Children are dropping out because their parents

can't afford the fees. The girls are more affected than the boys.

'The average class size is about 40 children. There are never enough textbooks, especially in subjects where the syllabus is being extended. Children share textbooks... say 20 among a class of 50. Our income doesn't allow us any luxuries. We'd like to improve the classrooms and teachers' accommodation. Furniture's a big need and we really need a better library.

'If we had some capital we would utilize the school's 14 hectares to generate income. We have a number of handicapped children – seven with physical difficulties and four deaf and dumb who have a special teacher. They pay very little in fees. The Ministry subsidizes the four boarders but I have to find food for them.

'So we can't manage without the income from parents. We can't afford to waive fees. We have to send children home or parents won't pay... The reaction comes slowly, though people usually end up paying. But sometimes a child just doesn't return. And that child's education is lost forever.'

The number of children losing their education is likely to increase. Uganda is bankrupt. Its national budget is a Kafkaesque combination of borrowings, repayments, foreign-aid grants and debt reschedulings. But there have been few cancellations – Uganda is allowed just enough money to keep playing the game to the lenders' rules. In 1992 over 70 per cent of its export earnings had to be handed over to Northern governments and institutions in debt repayments – four times the government's entire primary-education budget of just \$33 million. Education expenditure, which in 1960 was 3.2 per cent of GDP, dropped in 1991 to 0.9 per cent. Since then it has slowly started to rise again but the



Looking westward to the Ruwenzori foothills (above); Florence Muhindo among her coffee bushes (inset).

PHOTOS: GEOFF SAYER / OXFAM

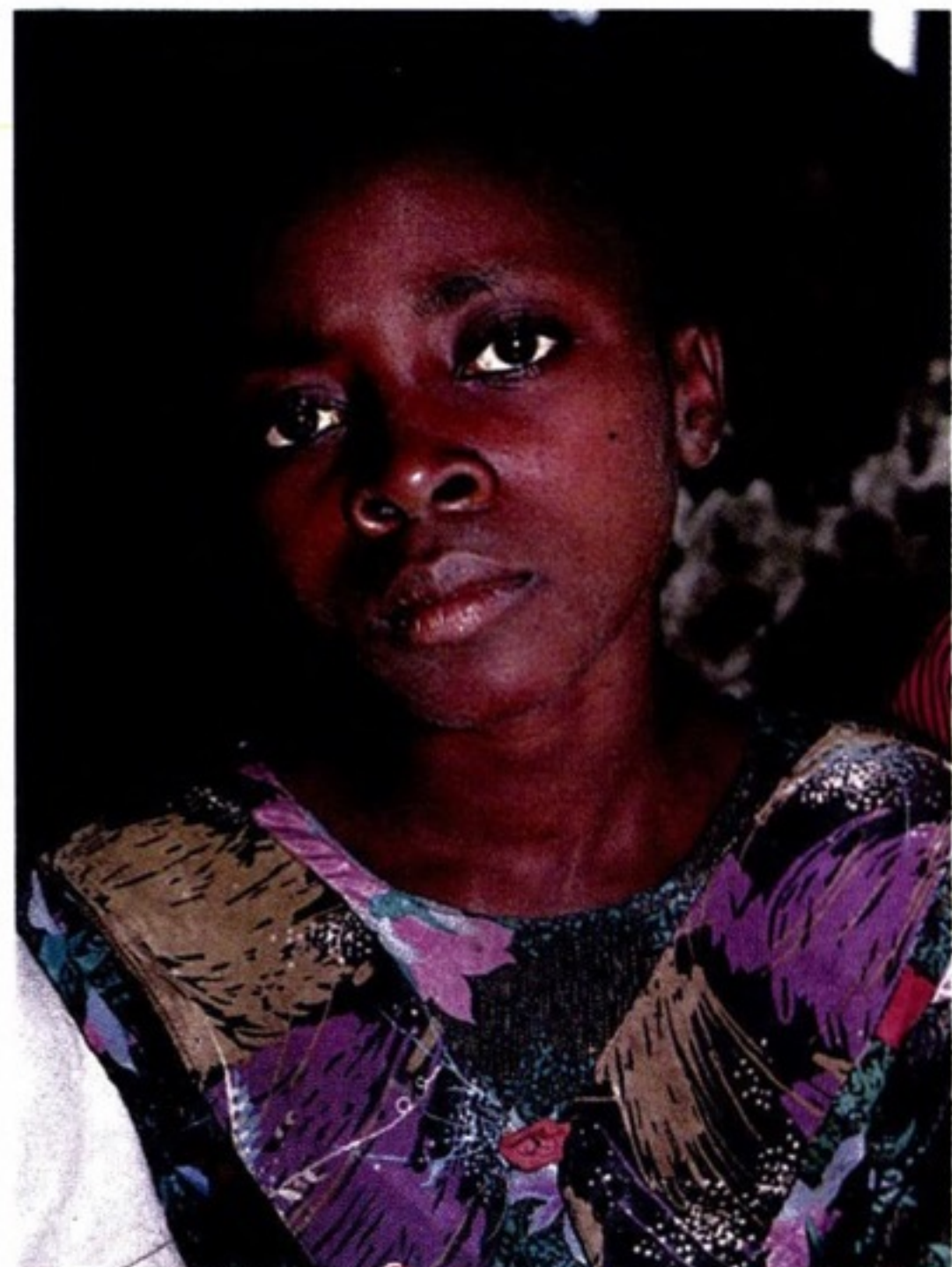
Government's goal of universal primary education remains a distant dream.

Everywhere in East Africa parents make immense sacrifices and call on all the resources of the extended family to secure a vestige of an education for their children, often in cramped bookless classrooms. No child complains at having to go to school. No salaried uncle escapes the call to support nephews and nieces through their school years. Parents desperately want their children to have an education, but even primary schooling remains out of reach for many families.

In Kenya's capital, Nairobi, 14-year-old Mwangi and his younger sister Wangoi confide their prayer-like hope that their mother will earn enough selling peanuts in Uhuru Park to return them to their village home and primary school. And Serah Wanjira, labouring through the city's wealthy Westlands suburb to sell her burden of vegetables, speaks angrily of the rising costs which are taking secondary education out of her children's reach.

At Kagando, in western Uganda, Faith

Tembao, who is 15, explains how she's given up her hopes of secondary school and her ambition to be a nurse, taking a poorly paid job to help her brothers through school.



Geoff Sayer / Oxfam

Will she be at school tomorrow?
A survivor at Kinyamaseke School.

In Musoma, on the shore of Lake Nyanza/Victoria in Tanzania, regional education officer Mr Mwita is emphatic about the decline in funding. 'State support is not on a plateau. It's deteriorating year by year, not just in this region but nationally. I don't know how we'll manage unless some Good Samaritan steps in. The onus will be on the communities to put their hands in their pockets.' The tragedy of people like Florence, Faith and Serah is that they are simply unable to do so.

Geoff Sayer works for Oxfam UK.

Drumbeats of hope on the hill

Where the state is unable or unwilling to provide an education, parents and communities are stepping in.

Didier Bloch goes to the Maria da Conceição school in North-East Brazil and finds a hive of activity.

MIDDAY. Little Selma shivers briefly under the spurt of cold water which flows slowly over her copper-skinned and slight body. Not even the cloudy sky of the tropical 'winter' could prevent the washing ritual. And then comes lunch, avidly devoured by the hundred pupils in the Maria da Conceição community school. Hygiene, food and alternative education. Who would say that we are in the most populous suburb of Recife, in Brazil's poorest region?

We are in fact in the Morro da Conceição (Conception Hill), famous for its activism. And hidden behind blue gates, under the huge mango tree, is the school, a real symbol of popular resistance.

The community-schools movement in Brazil is at its most active in Recife. These schools are formed by parents whose children are unable to get a place at state schools. There are more children than places at the state schools and entrance after the first grade is by examination so it becomes harder and harder for a child to get in. Many children, particularly if they are poor and black, are never given that chance.

Dark and skinny, at 14 Eronildo was

once such a child. He could not read or write, and kept failing to get accepted by the state school. Now, in the community school – where 'you don't have to keep your mouth shut, because everyone is a friend' – he has all that behind him and is studying in the equivalent of secondary school first year. He has learnt African dances and has already played in the small percussion group.

As his parents are unable to pay for a private school, where would Eronildo be were it not for the community schools? And where would Mônica, Anderson and Jarlene be, living with mothers who earn less than 60 dollars a month as a cleaner, waitress or seamstress?

The answer lies in the streets of Recife, in the police pages of the papers, and in Amnesty International's reports. Over ten million Brazilian children live on the streets, exposed to the violence of the traffic, the police and the death squads.

With its slopes which are unsafe in the rainy season, and its slums bursting with unemployed workers, the hill community of Morro da Conceição is a fairly typical example of the urban landscape in Brazil.

Painters not professors

Soviet rule in Latvia is now over. Education could begin to improve. But, as Sigma Ankrava reports, it is still under threat.

A UNIVERSITY professor in Latvia today has to think very carefully before inviting painters into her flat. It is likely to cost eight months' salary to have her hall and kitchen painted.

A teacher of my acquaintance, reprimanding one of her pupils for neglecting his studies, was given the scornful reply: 'You want to teach me how to live? Just look down at your feet. What is the use of knowing all the things that you know? You can't even afford to buy new shoes because even the cheapest would cost you half your month's salary.'

Another pupil wrote in an essay that he had changed his attitude towards his literature teacher since her husband succeeded in busi-

ness: he could not take her seriously before.

This evidence of teachers' low status is all the more shocking because in Latvia we have traditionally taken education very seriously. Since the seventeenth century, when the first Latvian schools appeared, we have always made the education of our children a priority. Latvia was one of the first European countries to solve the problem of illiteracy, which was almost eradicated in the nineteenth century. It would be almost unbelievable to find someone in Latvia today who couldn't read and write. And before the Second World War Latvia had a greater proportion of its population in higher education



Rigour in Riga: learning the Latvian language

Homer Sykes / Network

EDUCATION

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

What makes it different is the way its inhabitants have mobilized so forcefully to counteract the absence or inadequacy of state schools.

'Here the parents don't pay,' explains Lúcia. 'When they can, they help out with a kilo of rice or beans. On the other hand, participation in the monthly meetings is obligatory. In these gatherings, the school's work is discussed and at times criticized. But there is also a lot of laughter, tea-drinking and even exercises in group dynamics where the parents reveal themselves to be more childish than their offspring...'

Another novelty: the school staff are chosen by the community. This was the case with Nadja, currently the school co-ordinator, whose advancement would have been impossible in any public institution. 'I started off six years ago in the school canteen. Now I teach and am also responsible for part of the administration,' she says.

The choice of teachers depends more upon political commitment than upon university training. However, to encourage study, those who are qualified earn more. Everyone agrees: 'It is very important that the child learns to read and write, and this requires a certain degree of technical ability. But it should always be remembered that the real objective is to help turn the children into citizens in every sense.'

'Today I'm going to break everything!' shrieks an almost hysterical voice coming from a tot not even waist-high. And he starts to do just that. This form of less peaceful expression is not rare. 'Many children come to us with emotional imbalances,' Lúcia admits, 'since we give priority to those from the worst circumstances. Hence the importance of the methodology that we develop. In Brazil, poor and black continues to be synonymous with stupid. We aim to

Lesson One:
Selma takes a
soaking.



DIDIER BLOCH / ZARABATANA

strengthen self-esteem, recovering positive aspects of popular culture so that the children begin to believe in themselves.'

What Lúcia refers to as 'learning through cultural practice' was started by simple visits to parents while they were at work. 'The results were surprising. Both parents and children were very enthusiastic,' she remembers. The next step was to explore the rich and varied culture in the neighbourhood, in particular that of African origin which was brought over by the slaves and is still very much alive. This is how the study of the dance rhythms of *maracatu*, *samba*

and *frevô* made its way into the school.

Parents have appreciated the school's work for a long time. One of them, Pedramérico, is a real fan: 'Maria da Conceição doesn't just educate or give the kids a good time. It does both of those things but, better still, it goes out of its way to liberate the child's intelligence. It's a place where they think in educational terms but without losing the ability to laugh.'

Translated by **Sarah Bailey**, who works with **Didier Bloch** for **Zarabatana**, a media group working on development issues and based in North-East Brazil.

than any other country in Europe.

With the introduction of the Soviet system some 50 years ago the positive attitude towards education began to change. The prestige of good education fell. This was achieved, first of all, by paying extremely low salaries to highly educated professionals like doctors, engineers, and school or university teachers. Second, the Soviet system was geared to the average pupil or student. Teachers had to spend most of their time helping the slower pupils to catch up. They could even be punished for having too many bad pupils. The children were expected to understand, memorize and reproduce. Creativity and a questioning attitude were ruled out. This was supposed to help students as they became adults to fit into the huge state mechanisms, where everybody had to do what was expected of them and not ask questions.

Finally there was the curriculum. Under

the Soviet system all schools used the same textbook for the same subject. This had some positive and some negative aspects. On the positive side, it ensured one definite level of education throughout the country. More negatively, however, pupils were all given the same dictatorial view of the world. Many of these textbooks are still in use today. There is no money to buy new ones.

The age of dictatorship is now over. The end of Soviet rule has brought new ways of working, of thinking and of educating our children. The new education law stresses the responsibility of parents for their children's education. Parents and teachers understand this, and there have been many moves to improve the school system. There has been a mushrooming of 'vocational' schools: business, commerce and applied arts. Humanities, too, has started to change.

But all this takes time – and money.

Education is going to become expensive. If parents want extra tuition they have to pay – not a large sum at the moment, and the State pays subsidies to families with children. But it is becoming more difficult to make ends meet. So students cannot afford to take up academic careers, and academics are leaving Latvia because of low pay and low status. Someone working in a private company might earn four or even five times as much as a university professor.

I would like to think that these problems will disappear and that one day we will educate our children in circumstances where they will want to be professors as well as painters. There was once a saying that every second person in Latvia is a poet. It will take time, but I hope that this will become a reality once again.

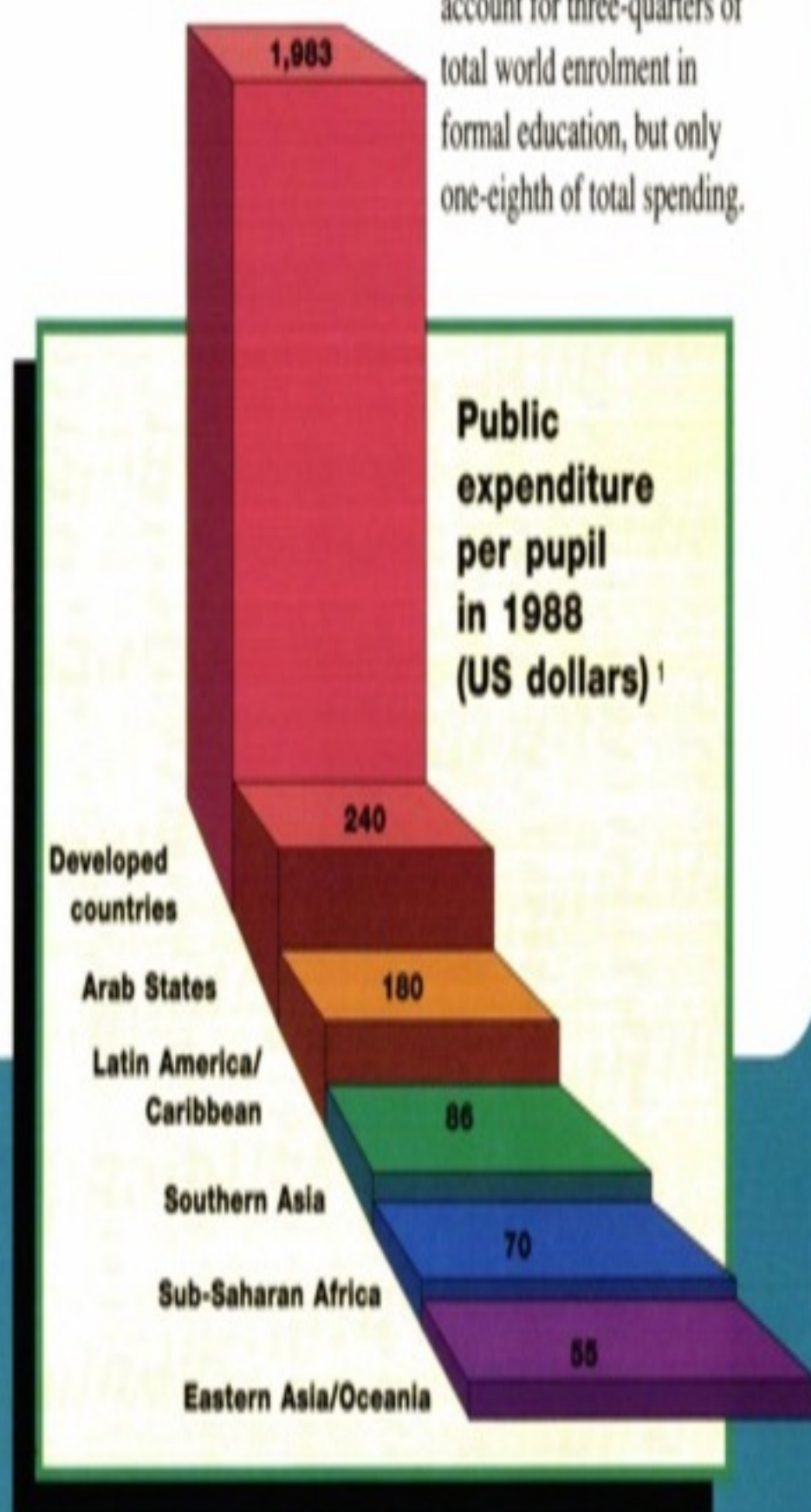
Sigma Ankrava is Professor of English at Riga University.

THE 1980s saw an educational decline which eroded many of the gains of previous decades. Teachers are demotivated and often badly paid, classrooms are in disrepair. In some countries parents are forced to choose which of their children are to be educated. In others, education is becoming enterprise and private schools are booming - for those who can afford them. The goal of free education for all still seems a long way off.



North and South

There is still a huge gap in spending on education between the developed and the developing world. Africa, Asia, and Latin America account for three-quarters of total world enrolment in formal education, but only one-eighth of total spending.

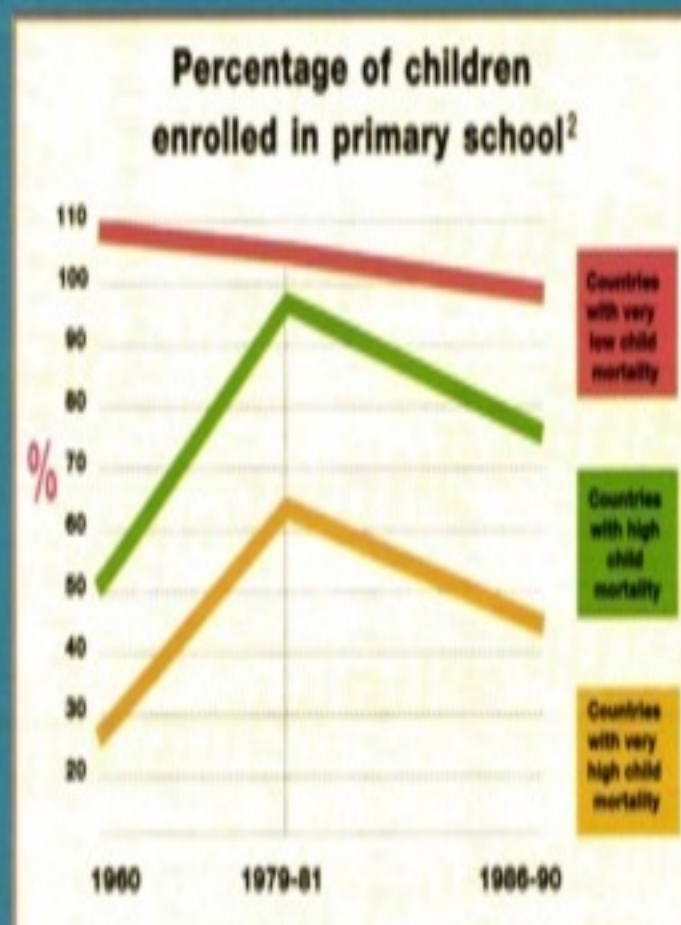


Spending trends



The share of world GNP spent on education, having risen in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, has now fallen back to the same level - 5.5% - as in 1970. But this global figure masks the dramatic fall in education spending in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1980s.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, expenditure on education increased from \$1.3 billion in 1970 to \$11 billion in 1980. Since then there has been a steady decline in spending, until in 1988 spending levels had decreased to \$7.1 billion.
- In sub-Saharan Africa between 1980 and 1988 there was a decline of 33% in public expenditure per pupil. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there was a decline of 11%.
- In Asia and the Arab world expenditures per pupil rose in the 1980s, but more slowly than in the previous decade.



Roll-call

Throughout the world the percentage of children receiving primary education has fallen during the 1980s. The poorer the country (the index of poverty used in the table on the left is its child-mortality rate), the more dramatic this fall has been.

This fall was often due to structural-adjustment programmes imposed by the IMF which squeezed already limited government spending on education and other services. Education's share of total government spending shrank from 15% to 12% in countries undergoing intense adjustment programmes between 1980 and 1986.

¹ Includes pupils in pre-primary, first and second level. From *World Education Report 1991*, UNESCO. ² State of the World's Children 1993, UNICEF. The percentage can exceed 100% because of children in school from outside the normal age-range. ³ See E. James in *Comparing public and private schools: institutions and organizations*, T. James & H.M. Levin eds (Falmer Press, Brighton 1988). ⁴ Sarvekshana 1988, quoted in: *World Development Report 1990*, World Bank. ⁵ *World Education Report 1991*, UNESCO.

Drop-outs

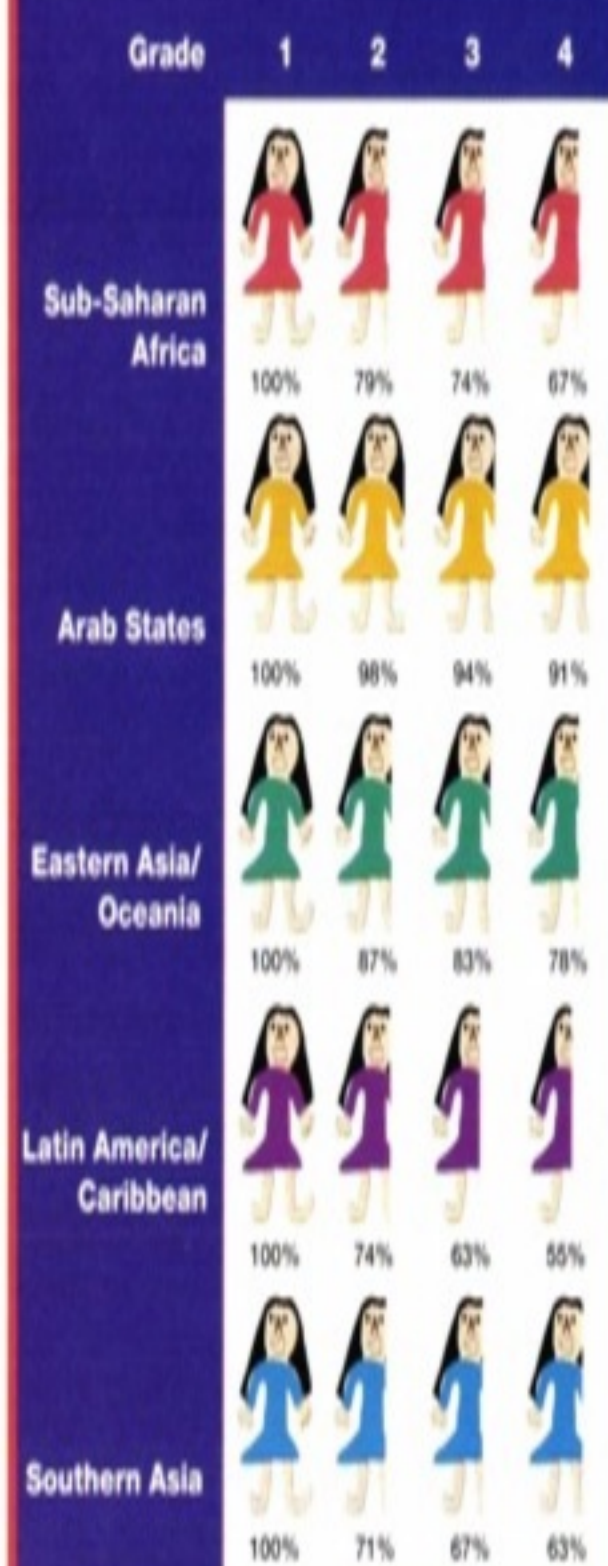
Getting children into school is one thing; keeping them there is another. Nearly one-third of all children who start primary school drop out before they have completed four years. The majority of such children are girls, and most are in developing rather than developed countries.



Private drive

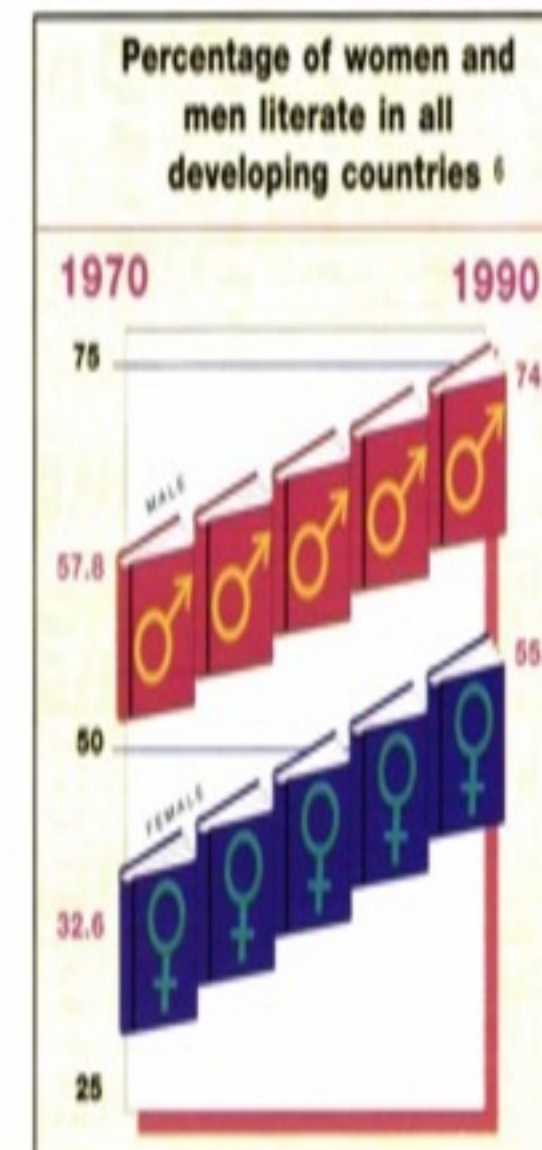
The UN Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to a free primary education. But as funding for the state sector falls, parents who can afford to do so are opting out of crumbling classrooms and overstrained teachers.

Estimated percentage of children who stay in school¹



A woman's right to read

The UN Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to read. Despite vast improvements in adult literacy over the last three decades, there are still 900 million adults in the world who cannot read or write. Two-thirds of these are women. Yet educating women not only improves their quality of life. It also reduces infant mortality and family size, and improves the health and productivity of the entire family.



Make education your husband

Without schooling, a girl is left stranded in the home. For black South Africans this may mean being a servant in the home of a white family. Sindiwe Magona recalls her own escape due to her mother's insight.

'MAKE education your husband,' my mother used to say. 'He will never tire of you. If I was growing up during these times of yours, my child, I would not bother getting married. I would just make sure I got an education and then worked for myself.'

Even as a very young child, I was aware of the tremendous importance of education. 'Akaboni' (s/he is blind), say the Xhosa people of one who cannot read. Mama told me repeatedly that I would be insane not to fit myself with the only means of self-support that I could ever hope for – an education. She believed that just as we teach children to walk, so we should give them at least primary education. Education is a debt that each generation owes the next.

For an African woman of her age and circumstance, Mama was very progressive in her thinking. Even today, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, there are still countries in Africa where women are in such total dependency on their men that they do not have a right to a pension. 'Her husband will look after her,'

is the thinking of officialdom, and this is reinforced by law. Despite an abundance of evidence to the contrary, the myth persists that for every woman there is a man out there who will always be able and willing to provide for her every need. And so, in places where resources are scarce, it is the girl child who misses out on an education. She is condemned to drop out of school at an early age; to remain 'unsighted' in the modern world.

Thanks to my mother, I was lucky. I did go to school. What is more, I went to secondary school as well as primary, and even to teacher training. By the age of 19, I was 'something', not only in my own eyes but also in the eyes of the community. Such was the lack of educated people that even with qualifications that would seem like ant spittle in other parts of the world, I

was held in very high esteem. I was a one-eyed giant in the land of the blind.

When, at the age of 23, I found myself a single parent with three children who depended solely on me for their survival, I saw the tremendous advantage that was mine. Many a woman finding herself in a similar situation would have had no other alternative but to find another man to provide for her.

I chose to remain single. I decided to raise my three children alone until the youngest finished high school. Why? I knew that any man marrying a woman in her early twenties would expect to have children with that woman. But I also knew that children are not cement; they do not glue a man to the woman who is the mother of his children. This is what that brilliant teacher, bitter experience, had taught me by this time.

ILLUSTRATION: BRITISH DEFENCE AND AID FUND





The colours of liberation: an extract from the ANC's Freedom Charter.

Would I have been in a position to make those choices had I not had my teacher's certificate, humble as it was? Would I have even been aware that such choices existed, that it was not compulsory to be always attached to a man? I made those choices because I had the means of supporting myself and my children. I knew I would not be confined to menial jobs for the rest of my life. Although I had to work for some time as a domestic labourer, I knew that one day I would go back to teaching. And as soon as I was able to start teaching again, I started studying once more, building on the qualifications that I had. They gave me the ability to dream. And that was crucial. I had a stepping stone to greater things – a stepping stone that eventually got me over the water to a job in the United States.

In the meantime, I knew that I was my children's only resource. The Government didn't care. I was determined that my children would get an education. Aware that men, even uneducated men, enjoy better employment opportunities in South Africa, and that women labour under tremendous disadvantages in society, I felt it was my duty to make sure my daughters got an education.

Girls are fitted for the role of wife and mother from the start. From about the age of five, even before they start school, girls are taught to sweep, fetch water from the river, tidy up after a meal, wash and put dishes away, and look after younger children. That last chore, minding children, is perhaps the most lethal to the education of a girl. Whenever mother cannot be with the younger children the eldest girl has to

deputize. African women, by definition the poorest of the poor, do not have nannies to mind their children while they go about these demanding duties: they have their own girl children. And so the cycle of educational deprivation continues...

So I was determined to send my girls to school. But events were not always under my control. Black education underwent a violent rupture in 1976, when the Soweto Uprising took the schoolchildren onto the streets. My children, then in primary school, were only mildly affected at first. But some years down the road, when they were in high school, this changed. Like all other schoolchildren, they went on strike. Their schooling came to an end. My paltry plan had foundered.

The thought that I had borne children who would be forced to work as cleaners and nannies in white homes was a nightmare that drove me to the brink of insanity. Was that all their lives would be? Terrible as Bantu education was, it was still better than no education at all. At one stage, shortly before the boycotts, I had nearly taken my eldest daughter out of primary school and put her on a correspondence course. I had had enough of irrelevant subjects being taught to her in Afrikaans, a language she did not understand. I protested publicly against Bantu education. But in the end I kept her in school. At least it would give her the bare basics, something she could use towards a real education which would give her the confidence that she belongs to this world. I was truly horrified at the thought that she might miss out on her education altogether.

Yet this is precisely what happened. In the early 1980s my children roamed the streets. They had no education. They were part of the lost generation of Southern Africa, the generation who were sacrificing their own future for what they saw as a greater cause – 'the struggle'. They brought their plight to the attention of the world, but in doing so they lost their own education. For me, this was too great a sacrifice; too high a price to pay.

So when I was offered a job overseas in 1984, I knew that I had to go. I knew that it would not be easy to find them an education in the US when they had missed out on so much. I knew that, in their late teens and early twenties, they would probably be the oldest children in the school. But I wanted to give them back their future, however hard this proved to be. I fled South Africa to allow my children to resume their education. I owed them that much. ■

Sindiwe Magona is the author of *Forced to Grow* (the second volume of her autobiography) and *Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night* (short stories) – published by the Women's Press in the UK. She currently lives in New York.

The devil or the dustbowl

Government schools in Egypt are starved of funds. Foreign institutions are booming but even if you can afford them they carry dubious cultural baggage. Karim Alrawi looks at the options for his own daughter.

My daughter is turning five years old. It is time for her to be launched into the world of school. But to choose a school for one's child in Egypt is not a simple matter.

Egypt's government schools are not just overcrowded but also desperately underfunded. The grim and grey concrete buildings stand in dustbowls in which the children spend their breaks. In most of these schools there are no patches of grass or beds of flowers to break the monotony of the stony playgrounds. The buildings are of poor quality, and the textbooks, printed on

newsprint paper, are years out of date.

The curriculum is archaic and largely based on rote learning. There is no place for arts or sports, just the endless tedium of reciting facts out loud. Large parts of the curriculum are a product of a political underdevelopment. This is particularly true of religious education, which is beset with a narrowness that borders on bigotry. As part of the Government's attempts to appease the rise in political Islam, they have accorded to fundamentalists a privileged position from which to influence education. The Islamists have concentrated on religious studies to disseminate their sectarian ideas to children.

It was not always like this. During the

1960s, a decade after independence, the Egyptian school system was of a standard with many European countries. That position has been eroded by two things: uncontrolled population growth, with a million new-born babies every ten months; and debt – though Egypt has less of a debt problem than many other developing countries, the burden of repayments has severely limited spending on social services and education. As a result parents who can afford it vie to send their children to foreign schools. The foreign-school market is growing – and a market it certainly is. Promises are thickly laid out before the prospective parent.

'We are the best school in Cairo,' I am told by one of the teachers at the British School around the back of the Cathedral. I suppose they should be, at \$11,000 a year. 'We teach our children enterprise,' she says proudly.

'The German School is the best,' I am told by a parent waiting to have her four-year-old daughter examined for the German kindergarten. 'They only take the children of government ministers.' Then she confides in a whisper: 'The Germans are the best at teaching enterprise.'

That leaves the Italian School, the French School, the American School and the Pakistan International School to visit. They all claim to give the best education, have lots of computers, love their kids to bits and teach them 'enterprise'.

After a couple of weeks of researching the various options I realize that I have no idea which is the best school and which would be best for my daughter. I have no

Society under scrutiny: students who opted for the Egyptian rather than the American University of Cairo.



idea how anyone can judge fairly between them. They all have an array of smiling faces but each school teaches in a different language and according to a different curriculum. 'Enterprise' is the only key word connecting them all.

These élitist foreign schools have a further great advantage over the state sector in the access they have to further education. The government-funded universities operate a quota system that reserves places for foreign-school students: students with British GCSEs, for example, have 10 per cent of university places reserved for them. The students still have to achieve excellent grades to gain entry but they know there is a place just waiting for them if they achieve them, increasing the chances of their getting into the best universities in Cairo and Alexandria.

If they fail, there is always Egypt's private university, the American University of Cairo (AUC). Fees are around \$15,000 a year. The courses follow an American curriculum. The students all speak English, though many of them barely so. The students, who are often a product of the foreign-language education system, form a clique of young people who speak their own mix of English, French and Arabic. They never complete a sentence in any one language. Their vocabulary is that of American soap operas, French fashion magazines, and the Arabic of the nursery. A multilingualism that amounts to little more than a sophisticated inarticulateness makes them incomprehensible to all but their own kind.

Ironically, even the fundamentalists, for all their xenophobic outpourings, frequent the foreign institutions. Several of them send their children to AUC, where they attend classes bearded or veiled.

The implicit promise of these foreign academic institutions is that they increase a student's chances of gaining grants and scholarships and continuing their education in Europe or the US. And yet a former education officer at the British Council assured me that graduates of the free state-run universities of Cairo and Alexandria gain a much greater share of overseas scholarships than do the fee-paying graduates of AUC.

It was no surprise to me to hear this. I once taught at AUC and know all too well that high fees are no guarantee of academic excellence. I recall students telephoning me at home to complain about their poor grades and demanding to be upgraded. They'd offer me gifts, which I would always refuse. Their exclamation of outrage would usually be followed by 'but I pay my fees in dollars!'

The graduates of AUC are increasingly filling the positions of middle management at the local branches of foreign banks and businesses. As their numbers increase, they

are becoming an 'enterprising' class of middlepeople, a cushion for foreign businesses in their dealings with the locals. It is a role similar to, though more subtle than, the one assigned to religious and racial minorities in the old British Empire.

I stopped teaching at AUC two years ago, but some things never go away. Earlier this year, I was shown the AUC theatre department's newly-drafted booklet. My name was predominantly displayed as a faculty member and resident writer. I thought this to be both inaccurate and dishonest. I asked for an explanation. Dr Donald McDonald, the University President, was unperturbed. He explained that it was just part of the 'enterprising' business of attracting new students.

The culmination of all this 'enterprise' was brought home to me a few days ago when a woman telephoned to ask if it was true that I charged a thousand dollars for advice on creative writing. It transpired that an AUC student was running a nice little business advising aspiring writers – collecting their written material, then sending them back her analysis of their work. The only problem was that she was collecting a thousand dollars from each

writer and signing my name on her critiques. It took a couple of days to extricate myself from the fraud and exonerate myself from any complicity in it.

The experience was salutary. It demonstrated how well students learn from these foreign institutions with academic pretensions. The example of high fees and false claims teaches them to be enterprising predators in search of an easy buck. It also makes me question whether I have made the right choice for my daughter's education.

In the end I opted for the French School on the basis that the fees are reasonable, the curriculum is as taught in France and is overseen by inspectors from the French Ministry of Education. If nothing else, she will learn French to add to her English and Arabic.

But I continue to wonder what this will mean for her. I feel like the chronic underfunding and inadequacy of the government schools left me with no choice – but I also know that she will now be educated into a culture that is not her own. ■

Karim Alrawi is one of Egypt's leading playwrights.



PHOTOS: BRUNO BARBEY / MAGNUM

Between two worlds: the Westernized middle classes visit the Palace of Ras el Tin, Alexandria.

Simply... the right to read

For those of us who learned to read at five years old it is hard to understand what it would be like to understand and speak a language fluently but not be able to write it or decipher the signs and documents that govern our lives in the modern world. This activity is designed to give you just a glimpse of what it is like to learn to read. Try it – in a group, with a class, or just for fun...

Here are two statements about the importance of education. Imagine you are taking part in a referendum which is going to shape the future of your country's education system. Your vote may be vital but first you have to understand the manifestos, which are written in International Phonetic Alphabet (a universal way of describing human speech sounds, whatever the language).

If you are trying to decipher it on your own, you will find the alphabet key on the far right – and if you are still flummoxed the translations of the statements appear upside down under the manifestos in the centre.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Make copies of the manifestos (without the translations) and the alphabet cards A, B and C.
- 2 Divide your group into pairs and give each pair one of the alphabet cards and the two manifestos.
- 3 Each pair must learn the symbols and the sounds given to them on the card. They can draw pictures to help them do this, but they must not write anything down in their usual alphabet.
- 4 Everyone should now have learnt a third of the alphabet. Split up the groups and make new trios with one person from each of the old groups in each trio.
- 5 Each person should teach the other two people in their trio all the sounds and symbols they have learnt. The same rules apply to what they can draw or write.
- 6 Once this has been done, everybody should know all or most of the symbols and sounds.
- 7 Give one manifesto to each person. They should translate it into their usual alphabet, if necessary with the help of the rest of their trio.
- 8 As a whole group, you could then discuss the manifestos, and then vote on them.

M A N I F

eɣukeɪŋ ɪʊ

tiʃ piːl tu

kwestɪn ʊ

weɪd ɹɪːm

weɪ

Answer:
Education should teach people to
question the world around them.

K aʊ ʃ eɪ tɪ pɪ ŋ n u ɣ ɔ

CARD A

Vowels	Consonants	
e	t ð	ðet (yet) ðel (yell)
ʊ	k l	kʊtʃ (couch) plʊ (plough)
ɪ	p ʃ	kɪlt (kilt) ʃɪp (chip)

CARD B

Vowels	Consonants	
ʊ	ð θ	ðʊ (due) θʊ (through)
ɔ	ɾ w	wɔɾ (worn) θɔɾ (thorn)
ɜ:	ɾ	ɜ:ð (urge) wɜ:θ (worth)

CARD C

Vowels	Consonants	
ʊ	ʃ d	ʃʊd (should)
i	θ	θi (thee) siθ (seethe)
ʌ	s	mʌd (mud) dʌm (dumb)
eɪ	m	ʃeɪm (shame) deɪm (dame)

E S T O S

eʃʊkeɪʃn ʃʊd

tiʃ pipl tu

ɾɪspekt

ɔθɾɪti

Answer:
Education should teach people to
respect authority.

You might then like to look at the issues raised by the exercise:

- **How did it feel to be asked to make a decision about something that you didn't fully understand?**

When people can't read, they are limited to information transmitted through the radio or television – which are much easier for governments to control.

- **How difficult was it to learn the new symbols?**

It is easy to take being able to read for granted – to be faced with symbols that you do not know but that you know you need can be a very disempowering experience.

- **Did you enjoy the active involvement?**

This method of teaching people to read by means of active political or community involvement was developed by Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire.

- **What limits people's ability to learn more?**

Unless they have access to books using the phonetic symbols they will probably forget most of them. Libraries are essential if people are to develop their skills.

This exercise has been adapted from *Right to Read*, a development-education activity. Development education is a process which aims to enable people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world, and to take more control of their lives. It does this through participatory methods.

A fuller version of this activity is published by **Leeds DEC, 151-153 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ, UK. Tel: (0532) 784030.** For more information on development education, see the *Action* section on Page 28.

ɾ w ɜ: θ i s eɪ ʃ ʌ ʊ m θ d

Lives of Love and Hope

Conservatives are reshaping the curriculum in many parts of the Western world. But in the inner cities teachers, parents and pupils are fighting back. Headteacher Chris Searle puts the case for resistance by looking at a project of just the kind the New Right wishes to extinguish.

ULRIKE PREUSS / FORMAT

In the hearts of our inner cities are classrooms of the world, and the world beats in our classrooms. Such was the belief of a group of inner-city teachers and pupils in a school in Sheffield, UK, when they conceived the idea of a book: *Lives of Love and Hope*. They aimed to counter the new conservative ethos that told teachers, in the words of John Major, the Prime Minister, 'not to waste their time on the politics of gender, race and class', but to get on instead with the introduction of a curriculum severed from community.

In 1988, Kenneth Baker, then Secretary of State for Education, proclaimed that 'the age of egalitarianism is over'. He was signalling the beginning of the Thatcherite conservative restoration in British education. Four years later Major was moving still further, telling teachers from the podium of the 1992 Conservative Party Conference to get on with buttressing the market system of education, preparing students for a prescribed National Curriculum, and faithfully testing it at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 – while having both eyes fixed upon their schools' progress up the examination league tables.

This British era of 'conservative restoration' in education is part of a general rightward political and cultural swing across Europe (with its revival of violent racism) and North America. The usual process of the UK aping the US has been reversed in educational policy, as many American state education authorities begin to study and emulate the restrictive and centralizing example of the British National Curriculum.

In Britain itself the market has begun to tighten its grip on education, as schools are enticed to opt for semi-independent status. Among the first victims of this practice are the large numbers of inner-city school-age children – as many as 66,000, according to one survey¹ – who are being set aside as

soiled goods and permanently excluded from school. The more schools have to sell themselves as attractive, efficient units in the marketplace the less inclined they are to take on school students with discipline (or any other) problems – and the more the principle of compulsory education for all is undermined.

A disastrous scenario, it seems, for progressive teachers and those schools genuinely determined to serve their students and communities. Yet today, many of the priorities and plans of the Conservative Government are in ruins. Teachers and headteachers throughout Britain are boycotting national tests and ignoring the command curriculum – and have just won a key battle, forcing the Government to abandon the idea of testing at 7 and 14. They reject the identity of being, as the American educationalist Michael Apple has put it, 'the factory hands' of the classroom, 'whose duty it is to carry out mechanically and unquestioningly the ideas and orders of those clothed with the authority of position' in the reconstructed marketplace of state education.

During the previous two decades many teachers had sought to reconcile what is taught in inner-city schools with the real lives of those with whom they shared their classrooms. They rejected models of

streaming and constant competitive testing, developing instead more accurate, humane and motivating means of student assessment. Progressive teachers worked to use education to give authority to the life experience and intellectual strength of ordinary working people and their communities.

Although these approaches have taken a battering since 1988, they are still alive and kicking in many of Britain's schools. *Lives of Love and Hope* is in itself evidence of this. The title was taken from a poem by Emteaz Hussain, a young Pakistani woman, who wrote:

*'And we were raised in the life of love and hope
Because I was born the daughter of a steel-worker
And the baby of a mother with the name of Asha
And I was raised in the light and I was born to fight...'*

They are part of an oral history and herstory campaign to tell the lives of the mothers and grandmothers of the children at Sheffield's Earl Marshal Comprehensive School. They were translated from at least five mother tongues, transcribed and edited by the students, and they speak proudly of struggle and endurance: flight from civil war in Somalia; the blinding of a young husband in the anti-colonial war against the





Inner-city smiles; but multicultural teaching is under fire.

British in Yemen; or the life of a miner's family in a UK pit village.

These stories affirm the school's internationalism and that of its constituent communities. They promote its anti-racism and they exemplify the importance given to 'story' as a vital form of critical literacy by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. The stories in *Lives of Love and Hope* are the world's stories, part of a universal curriculum that finds identity and pride in telling about being a human in the world.

Women from so many places on earth show in the stories the unity of their experience of childcare, drudgery, enterprise, rebellion, migration; of endless work and struggle. They also speak as one in their individual voices about the importance of education for those who come after – an education which they were mostly denied.

The stories gave the students new understandings of their mothers' lives and spurred them on into further study. But they also contributed toward their exams – they were an important factor in the powerful improvement in English examination results since the previous year. An enormous amount of effort had been put into the stories. A Bengali girl, whose father's antipathy towards her studying made it extremely difficult for her to work at home, transcribed her story sitting in bed in a cold

Why did the chicken cross the computer?

Because both were in a Tanzanian classroom. Computer technology and electronic mail are fast creating a global community – but one from which the poor are barred. **Alison Norris** shows how a Tanzanian and a British school are linking to break down the barrier.

THE image on the computer screen flickers. A chicken squawks in protest and flutters out from behind the machine. The school has been sent modern equipment and its only electric point is old-fashioned, designed for a chunkier plug; a flustered chicken can easily cut off the power. Luckily the computer has its own batteries; the teacher using it can save the letter he is writing before carefully rebalancing the plug and carrying on.

The computer is the latest addition to the school link set up in 1984 between Katumba II school in Tanzania and Peers School in the UK. Children from both schools have been visiting each other now for nearly 10 years. The new computer at Katumba can be connected to another at Peers by using electronic mail, or E-mail.

Staff at both schools value the link, whether it uses E-mail or sticks to old-fashioned letters. A deputy head at Peers commented: 'It changes the lives of the kids who go. It makes them completely re-think their values. They give away their jeans and their watches, and come back saying they are going to stop buying things they don't need. Of course, once they are back old habits gradually take over, but some things stick. They will always be more prepared to question what they see happening around them.'

A visit to the UK is just as much of an eye-opener for Katumba students. Many are struck by the way people rush around, by all the gear they need even to enjoy themselves, by the fact that there is still countryside.

Staff at Katumba had seen what computers could do for Peers and were asking for training before the British Telecom grant which funded this project came up. Being new, Katumba's machine is more powerful than most of the equipment at Peers, and already seems to be making the link more equal. This year the Tanzanians are hosting the visit. As always, the programme was negotiated with Peers staff; for the first time the plans were word-processed and printed at Katumba.

'Is that Peers' computer?' asked a Tanzanian student watching the machine print something out. Told it belonged to her school she was delighted: for once they had a piece of equipment they could be proud of.

Realizing the full potential of the new technology will take time. This is a pilot project, aiming to give a clearer idea of the problems as well as the benefits. So far it has taken a year of frustrating effort to get the kit to Tanzania and set it up. Once the E-mail is working smoothly the first exchanges will be between individual students, sharing likes and dislikes, their daily routine and what their neighbourhood is like. This fits in to a Social Studies course



ILLUSTRATION: ALAN HUGHES

at Peers; it is also part of finding out whether talking via the computer can provide the sort of challenges and insights that are such a valued part of the visits.

Already Peers students have started to wonder if they should let on how materially well-off they are. A debate on whether to mention the number of rooms in your house was settled by talking to a Tanzanian visitor. He explained that in Tanzania only fools built extra rooms unless they had people to fill them. Having a large tree in your courtyard was much more likely to be seen as a status symbol: people do most of their socializing outside and congregate where there is a lot of shade. In the future E-mail should ensure this sort of chance to learn about another culture is available every week and is open to students who would never have dreamed of taking part in a visit.

Once the introductory work is over students will be swapping information about their local environment and how well it is or is not cared for. At Katumba this will be turned into a billboard display which any interested students can use for reference. At Peers it will become a magazine supporting the Geography course.

The long-term effects of introducing E-mail are harder to predict. Katumba's mail will be sent through a newly established health-workers' network in Dar-es-Salaam. The school may decide to use the set-up to improve communications with Dar and, as the network grows, with the rest of Tanzania. News, research and resources from all over Africa, from all over the world, could be automatically left on the Katumba computer at their request. The Katumba-Peers E-mail link is an attempt to give one rural Tanzanian primary school a say – and to make it easier for others to follow.

Alison Norris is a worker at the Oxford Development Education Centre.

room in the early hours of the morning – the only time when she could work undisturbed and unprovoked. A Somali boy, who had been a refugee in an Ethiopian camp and had arrived in Britain two years before with no English at all, passed his exam despite a bout of tuberculosis that kept him away from school for two months.

The success of the herstories on so many different levels illustrates how important it is for the state to listen to the people, and allow them – alongside their teachers – to create a framework for their own education. As Marx wrote prophetically over a century ago: 'the state has need of a very stern education by the people.' And people in the

inner cities are now demanding more resources for education. They are demanding curricula which reflect their own needs and priorities, asking for new perspectives of knowledge which affirm their own past and guide them towards the future.

Through projects like *Lives of Love and Hope*, they are making pathways of curriculum and process around such life-affecting issues as racism, unemployment, attacks on health and on the environment, sexism, and the social desperation that leads directly to increased crime and drug abuse. They are struggling against the contempt for cultures and languages that are seen as 'un-British', with its Churchillian

and Thatcherite contentions about 'halting the relentless flow of immigrants... if we are to preserve the British way of life'.

We should be developing a critical and life-opening form of education and literacy, where each new word or number signals a hope for greater understanding, choice and involvement in the betterment of community life and individual fulfilment. Such a curriculum and its active implementation is not an ideal: it is a practical aim, a real strategy. But it needs inner-city schools to show leadership by actively resisting the narrow confines of the National Curriculum. This means involving parents, teachers and students – the people and the professionals – in a constant process of co-operatively building new curriculum projects and consolidating within the school new knowledges of language, history and culture.

It will be a curriculum where campaigning is education. And the campaign must be against the state agencies who want to tell communities what their children should learn – who seek to rubber-stamp 'official knowledge' on the hearts of inner cities and outlaw the ideas, democratic processes and truths which are expressed in their culture and history. We must hold up our alternative so that it exposes this form of dictatorship; we must develop and present our own examples of liberation and achievement in education forged by ordinary people all over the world. ■

Chris Searle is headteacher of the Earl Marshal Comprehensive School in Sheffield, UK.

1 On Out of Class, a BBC Panorama programme.

I think we've planned a narrow enough curriculum to breed a new, overwhelmingly stupid bunch of Conservative voters



VIV QUILLIN / CATH TATE CARDS

ACTION

People in the North can help as much by campaigning on issues like debt as working on those more directly connected to education. The *Debt* issue of *New Internationalist* NI (243) has a comprehensive list of organizations to contact.

In addition, children – and adults – need to be better informed about global issues and how they affect all our lives, so development education is of vital importance. Responsibility for development education is shared between the major aid agencies and independent local centres.

You might also like to link up with groups lobbying on local or national education issues.

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Auckland Development Education Centre, 177 Karangahape Rd, Auckland. Tel: (09) 3771 367.

Development Resource Centre, PO Box 11-345, Manners St, Wellington. Tel: (04) 472 9549. A new library set up by voluntary organizations to provide information on global environment, development and human-rights issues.

National Kohanga Reo Trust, Iritana Tawhiwhirangi, 11 Lipman St, Mount Victoria, Wellington. Tel: (04) 385 6913.

AUSTRALIA

Action for World Development, PO Box 117, Fitzroy, Vic 3065. Tel: (03) 419 5588.

Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 14 Napier St, Deakin ACT 2600. Tel: (616) 285 1816.

The umbrella group for aid agencies also has a development-education role.

Community Aid Abroad, 156 George Street, Fitzroy, Vic 3065. Tel: (03) 289 9444.

CANADA

Canadian Bureau for International Education, 85 Albert St, Suite 1400, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6A4. Tel: (613) 237 4820.

Canadian Education Association, 252 Bloor St West, Suite 8-200, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V5. Tel: (416) 924 7721. A lobbying group on education.

Development Education Centre, 555 Bloor St, West Toronto, Ontario M5S 1Y6. Tel: (416) 516 2966. A resource centre on global education.

Ten Days for World Development, 85 St Claire Ave East, Toronto, Ontario. Church group working on global education.

UNITED KINGDOM:

Campaign for State Education, 158 Durham Road, London SW20 0DG. Tel: (081) 944 8206. A campaigning organization.

Council for Education in World Citizenship, Seymour Mews House, Seymour Mews, London W1H 9PE. Tel: (071) 935 1752. Works with schools and young people.

Development Education Association, 29-31 Cowper Street, London EC2A 4AP. Tel: (071) 490 8108. This is a national network which can put you in touch with your local development-education centre.

National Literacy Association, 5 Airspeed Road, Priory Industrial Park, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 4HD. Tel: (0425) 272232. Running a new campaign which aims to achieve 99-per-cent literacy by 1999.

UNITED STATES

The American Forum for Global Education, 45 John St, Suite 908, New York NY 10038.

Tel: (212) 732 8606. Working to ensure that global perspectives become a permanent feature of American schools.

National Centre for Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia PA 19104-3111. Works on literacy issues.

Office on Global Education, Church World Service, 2115 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21218-5755. Tel: (410) 727 6106.

Further reading

Much of what has been written on education is very dense and full of statistics. But you might like to look at **Education in the developing world: Conflict and Crisis** by Sarah Graham-Brown (Longman, 1991). Graham-Brown lays out the myriad problems facing education in the South with great clarity.

There are a range of interesting books on education and literacy published by the World University Service. Their international offices are 5 Chemin des Iris, 1216 Geneva, Switzerland. **State of the World's Children 1993**, (published for UNICEF by OUP) is an excellent source of statistical material on education.

PERU



MARIA LUIZA M CARVALHO

Trying to build in the rubble of extreme poverty in Lima: the site of a land invasion.

Brutal harvest

Army and 'Shining Path' target poor communities

'P'RAY for us,' a Peruvian father implored as he rushed to the hospital with his five-year-old son. The boy had lost an eye in a machete attack by guerillas – the latest casualty in Peru's brutal civil war.

'The man burst into our room trembling and in a state of great distress,' reported Christian Aid's Wendy Tyndale after her visit to the turbulent area of Ayacucho in July. 'He told us that his village had been attacked just as it was growing dark. About 80 Shining Path guerillas, led by a young man of 20, attacked the villagers. They killed twelve people, six of them children.'

Christian Aid sources say that over half a million Peruvians – perhaps as many as 600,000 – have been forced from their homes by incidents such as this.

In some parts of war-torn Ayacucho peasant communities are rebuffing the Shining Path. Through self-defence *rondas campesinas*, peasant communities have managed to expel guerillas and also defend themselves against the army, which is no less savage. Such initiatives may have sparked vicious retaliatory attacks of the kind described to Wendy Tyndale.

The capture last year of Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman was a significant blow to the insurgent movement. On the ground in the shanty towns and the countryside, however, its presence is still felt. Fed by the extreme poverty in which most Peruvians live, this presence – as many as

500 cadres in the Lima shanty town of Villa El Salvador, for instance – is aimed against independent popular leaders and organiza-

What's in a label?

While appropriate drug-prescribing information is the norm in the US, this is not always the case when US multinational drug peddlers do business in 'developing' countries. A US Congress Office of Technology Assessment report found that in four selected countries – Brazil, Kenya, Panama and Thailand – of the 241 drugs sampled, two-thirds failed to provide the labelling information a physician needs. Reliance on poor labelling information alone could lead to serious or life-threatening medical problems or, at best, ineffective treatment.

US Congress, OTA Report Brief, April 1993.

The soul's burden

The human soul weighs one 3,000th of an ounce, according to researchers at the Technical University of Berlin. They weighed 200 terminally ill patients just before and immediately after they died, finding a one-3,000th-ounce weight-loss in each case. In a letter to German science journal *Horizon*, Dr Becker Mertens said his team had taken into account other possible explanations of weight loss (such as air leaving the lungs), but that 'the inescapable conclusion is that we have now confirmed the existence of the human soul'. The challenge now was to 'figure out exactly what the soul was composed of'. Any takers?

I to I, No 15.

tions. For Shining Path they are, like resistant peasant communities, 'counter-revolutionary'.

Last June Shining Path combatants shot community leader Michel Azcueta – twice mayor of Villa El Salvador – as he walked into the school where he taught. Four children were badly injured. One of them, 12-year-old Hans Camarena, was critically wounded when he threw himself over his two younger sisters to protect them.

Just over a year earlier, the then Mayor of Villa El Salvador, Maria Elena Moyano, was shot dead by the Shining Path and her body dynamited.

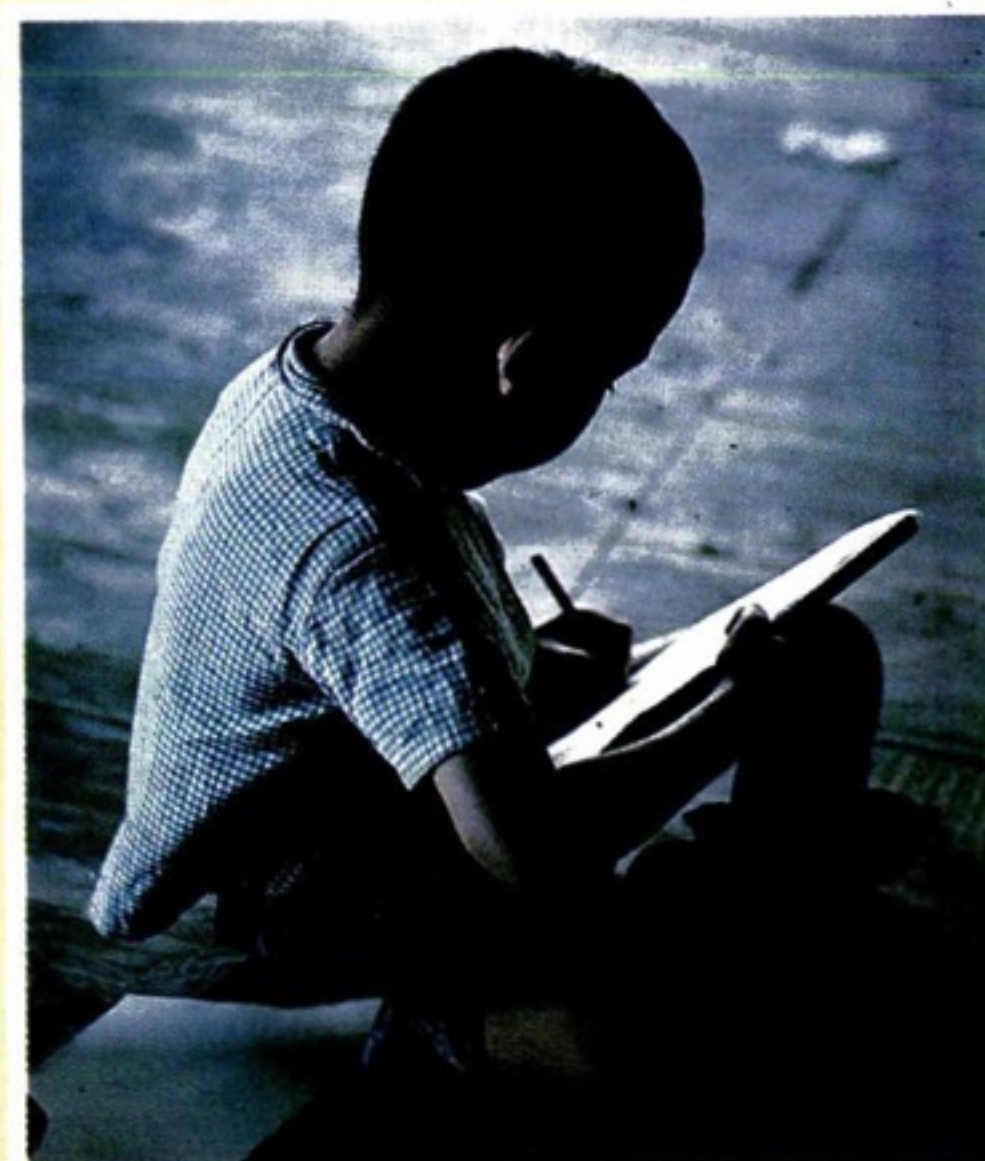
In shanty towns such as this thousands of displaced families live in absolute misery, lacking public services, schooling and health care. Water is trucked in and sold to an already impoverished population. Survival is a matter of community effort. What stands between them and starvation is often the work of women. They organize Lima's 9,000 popular kitchens, free milk distribution to children, shops and other community activities.

Shining Path executions are not the only problem for these communities. Peru has the largest number of 'disappeared' people in the world – for which the Peruvian security forces are chiefly responsible. President Fujimori rules as a virtual dictator with military support. The Peruvian people are caught in the middle.

Falling silent

More than 150 African languages are nearing extinction, according to the University of Cologne's Institute for African Studies. The languages are not being replaced by Western tongues but by major regional languages such as Hausa in Nigeria and Swahili in East Africa. This development troubles historians as well as linguists. The dying languages are largely oral, not written; with each one goes a people's history.

World Press Review, Vol 40, No 7.



CLAUDE SAUVAGEOT

THE ENVIRONMENT

Missing links

Roads like to make networks. When an environmentally sensitive area gets in the way the road advances from either side until nature falls to 'the inevitable' and the road runs through it. Two very different sites of great natural wealth and beauty, on opposite sides of the globe, are falling victim to the same device.

THE DARIEN GAP

The forest on the border between Panama and Colombia has a legendary reputation as impenetrable. Now a new attempt is being made to complete the Pan-American Highway from Alaska to Patagonia – and the Darien forest is the last remaining break.

LEOPOLDO BACORIZO's gentle face screws awkwardly into a frown as he contemplates the plan to drive a road through his people's home.

'The people of the city see the jungle as a piece of merchandise to be exploited for financial gain,' says Bacorizo, a leader of the Waunana and Embera tribes, who live in the Darien rainforest on the Panama-Colombia border.

'God put us here. We are part of the forest. We see it as our friend and we will fight to defend it from greedy men.'

The Darien rainforest is set to become Latin America's latest environmental battleground as government officials and traders enthusiastically tout the idea of a highway to join South and Central America.

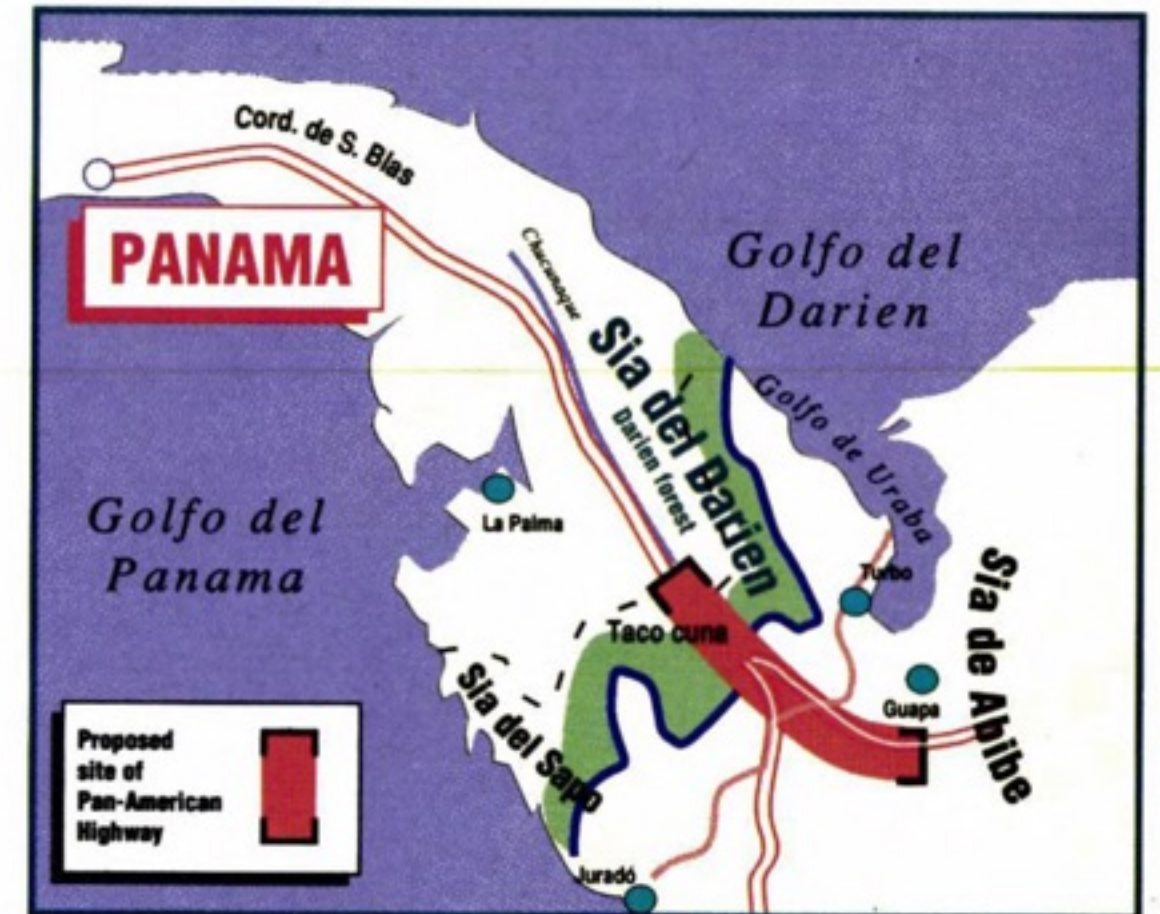
In a region whose leaders are firmly committed to free-trade agreements and improved communications, the idea of bridging the only remaining barrier to

traffic between Alaska and Patagonia has won considerable support.

'Colombia is ready to start building now. If Panama delays, we'll build our side anyway,' said Alfonso Araujo Cotes, Colombia's ambassador to Panama. 'This area really is a tremendous obstacle to trade, the only break in the Pan-American Highway. Before, we didn't have the technology to get through, but now we can do it. Just think – only 102 kilometres more highway is needed to unite the Americas.'

Opponents of the project predict that a road would devastate the jungle, shatter the culture of some 30,000 Indians living in the rainforest and stimulate the already flourishing activities of drug-traffickers.

'The road would be bad enough in its own right, but the building of a highway through rainforest always follows a pattern of attracting loggers and farmers who cause more and more damage,' said Juan Navarro,



one of Panama's leading environmentalists and head of the National Association for Nature Conservation (ANCON). 'It would be a disaster for the Darien, for Panama and for the world. The Darien has been a beacon, a mystery for centuries, a place of impenetrable forests and extraordinary biological wealth. It has to be kept that way.'

Currently, only a few Indians, guerillas and explorers trek through the lush mountain wilderness on a maze of overgrown paths. Most traffic between Panama and Colombia uses sea or air routes.

The Darien region – which includes the jungle area on both sides of the Panama-Colombia border – is home to 2,325 plant and 704 animal species, according to ANCON. Many of these species are not found anywhere else in the world. Some, like the black spider monkey, are already in danger of extinction.

The Panamanian Government supports the highway in principle but is keenly aware of the opposition and has been dampening Colombia's enthusiasm at a series of border conferences.

'From a mental point of view, the joining of the Americas like this is very important for the solidarity of the continent,' said Panama's Public Works Vice-Minister Laurencio Guardia. 'It also benefits trade, and possibly tourism, for the whole of Latin America. But we have other more important highways to build and improve in Panama first.'

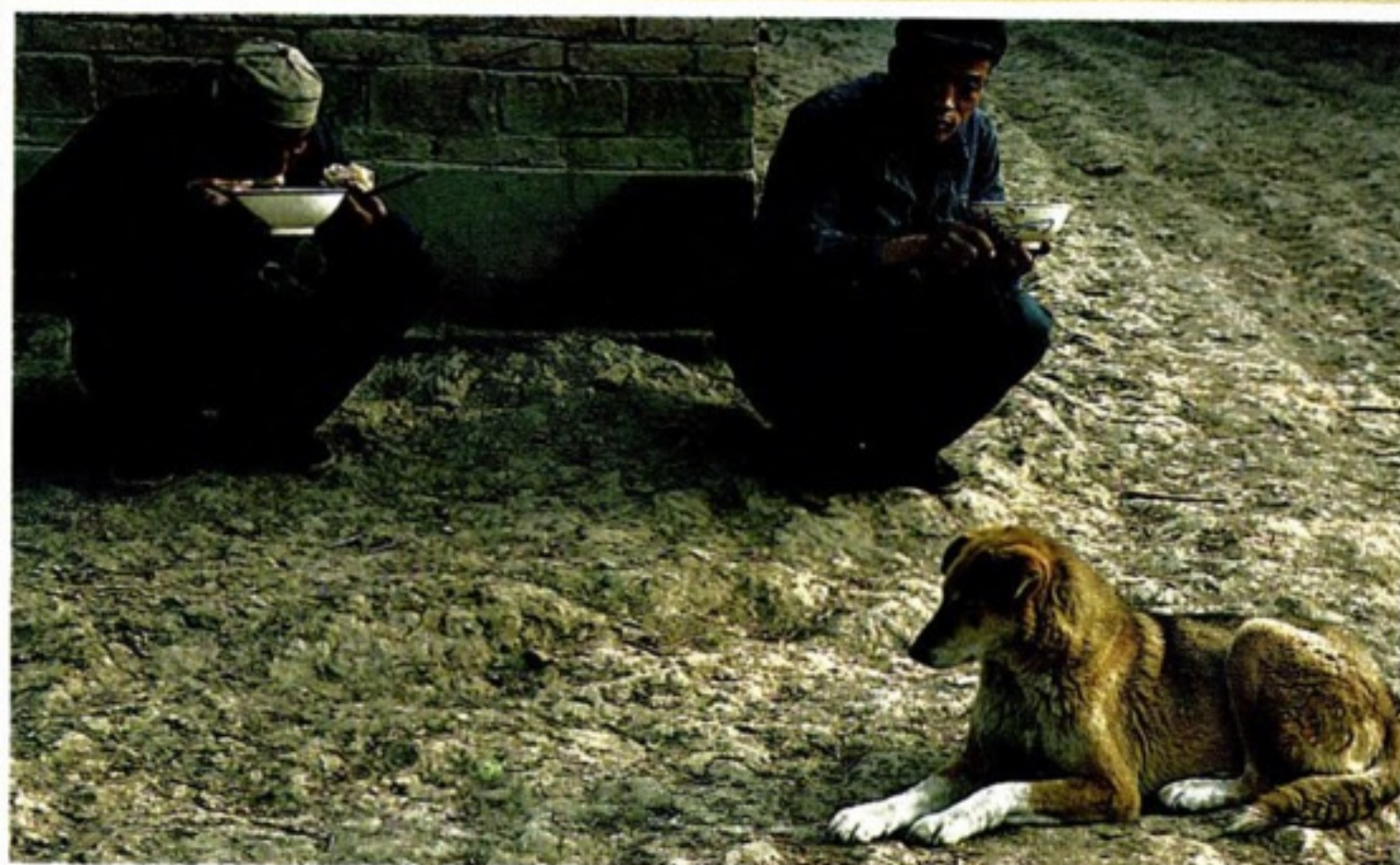
Officials estimate the highway will cost \$200 million and take three years to build. The preferred route is through a natural gap in the mountains on the border. As this route follows a lowland rift, it passes close to many of the Waunana, Embora and Kuna Indian settlements.

Locals are confident that even if the highway is built the jungle will have the last word. 'Let them try,' says Bacorizo. 'They may have a road for one or two months, but after three months the plants will creep back and after four months the rains will come. Soon their road will be a swamp again.'

Andy Cawthorne

Dog's day

Banned in cities since the Cultural Revolution, when they were considered needlessly wasteful, pet dogs are making a comeback in urban China. Still illegal, designer pets are the latest extravagance among the growing urban rich. Once regarded as semi-divine, pure-bred Pekinese are being smuggled in from Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. They fetch up to \$52,700 – a year's wage for 50 urban Chinese – according to Chinese newspapers.



A Hong Kong newspaper reported that a woman from southern Yunnan province agreed to breast-feed three puppies when a mother dog gave birth by Caesarean section and could not feed her pups. Her reward was a pup. For those who cannot afford to buy a pet, there is a new rent-a-dog service in suburban Peking, where customers queue up by the hundreds to walk a dog.

Far Eastern Economic Review,
Vol 156, No 27.

THE ENVIRONMENT



Right: 'Earth First' protester Jason Torrance, who secured himself to earth-moving machinery with a bicycle lock, waits for the fire brigade to release him after security guards poured 'liquid metal' glue into the lock.

Middle: No entry. The thin blue line oversees the destruction of an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Bottom: Private security guards from the firm Group 4, hired to protect the road-works, drag protester Dr David Abbott off the site in May 1993.

TWYFORD DOWN

The M3 motorway from London to Southampton is almost complete – except for a four-mile stretch that crosses an area of high value in terms of archeology, wildlife and natural beauty. A vast chalk-white wound has been inflicted on Twyford Down to make way for the road. It has become the site of exuberant protest, mass trespass – and symbolic attempts to repair the damage.



PHOTOS: NIGEL DICKINSON / LEADER PHOTOS



END

END Quote

'Women have a hard time in Africa. We have no voice; our men do all our talking for us. My role is to speak directly to women both through my songs and by setting an example, and show them that they can make decisions, that they can choose their own loved ones. The way is not easy and there will be suffering and struggle. But I'm proud to be involved in it.'

Oumou Sangare,
Mali's best-known female singer.



On the shores of a New World: the exquisite *Daughters of the Dust*.



film

Daughters of the Dust

directed by Julie Dash

Daughters of the Dust is the first full-length feature by the African-American writer/director Julie Dash, who has already established herself as a filmmaker of considerable note with shorts such as *Illusions*, about a black woman who passes for white in Hollywood during the 1940s. *Daughters of the Dust* continues Dash's project to construct a history of the female African-American experience. It is set on the Sea Islands off Georgia at the turn of the century as members of the Peazant family prepare to journey to the mainland to start a new life.

'We wear our scars like armour.'



The Sea Islands are where the captive Africans were landed before being sold. On the abolition of slavery many set up home there on this hinterland between America and Africa. Dash weaves its magical sense of place into the very texture of her film, drawing on diverse mythologies and traditions from Islamic to African, not least in the cadences of John Barnes' sweeping, almost operatic, score.

Dash eschews conventional narrative and knits up the story using different voices, which lends comparison to such African-American writers as Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison more readily than to other filmmakers. Here the charged wisdom of the family elder, Nana Peazant, and the sweet comments of a child about to be born into the family are braided together, holding this pivotal moment of beginnings and endings in place. Within that cradle, other stories and conflicts tumble and find resolve, whether that of Yellow Mary who left for the mainland years before and now leads an independent life as a prostitute, of Viola, who went to the mainland to become a Baptist, or of Eula, raped by a white landowner. *Daughters of the Dust* is about how these women resist victimization: 'we wear our scars like armour for protection'. These are the children of 'those who choose to survive'.

Exquisitely photographed by Arthur Jafa in the richest of colours, Dash honours the Peazant family with the beauty and grace that has been obscured by a colonial past - and present. There is a huge legacy to be dealt with. Full of ritual and celebration, *Daughters of the Dust* is a fittingly ceremonial place to begin.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★★★★★



music

Majurugenta

by Ghorwane (*Real World/Virgin*)

If Mozambique still lacks a presence in modern African music it's not for want of talent. Ghorwane - the name comes from a lake that, even in the hottest season, never runs dry - prove that. *Majurugenta* is their first commercial release: recorded in 1991, two years in the can has done nothing to reduce its vivacity.

Ghorwane were formed in 1983, in the thick of the bitter war that followed Portugal's cession of the former colony in 1975, and their own history is inextricably tied to the volatile politics of their homeland. Band members oscillated between the group and the army while their chief and prolific writer, Jose 'Zeca' Alage, was murdered earlier this year - the motive for the murder was not political but it reflects the social turmoil endemic in Mozambique.

Ghorwane take an unblinkered look at their society. The Alage-penned opening track -



Confidence in adversity: Ghorwane.

Muthimba - uses a traditional lament which speaks of the rigours of war. In *Buluku* ('Trousers') they sing that some women have resorted to prostitution to get clothing. *Mavabwyl* ('Illness') remembers those dying in hospitals where medicines are rare: the implicit message is that the Frelimo government is too busy fighting the Renamo rebels to provide for its population.

These were, as Ghorwane's popularity attests, accurate snapshots of everyday life in Mozambique. Yet it wasn't only the civilian listeners who paid close attention to such lyrics. The *boefs* - security services - were also interested and it was only the direct intervention of the late president Samora Machel that saved the band back in the mid-1980s.

The subject matter may be weighty but it is set to music characterized by a light and insinuating quality. The nine-piece

band intersperses traditional Mozambican rhythms with hints of *zouk*, *soukous* and even reggae, and there are Brazilian overtones in the instrumentation - horns, percussion and a weave of rhythm guitars - which contribute much of the danceable atmosphere. And the album's title track, which refers to a fashion style, is equipped with the kind of captivating guitar lilt that would put much Western dance music to shame.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★★★★★



books

Bloodlines

by Kev Carmody (*Festival*)

Despite both groups being prisoners of sorts, Australia's convict colony mostly sat uncomfortably with its *de facto* hosts, the Aborigines. Now, 200 years later, elements of colonial Irish 'larrikinism' and Aboriginal questioning have been blended with blues and folk to form an inspiring musical package.

Carmody, a Murri Aborigine, is the son of an Irish father and a Murri mother. *Bloodlines*, his third album, has an energetic and richly layered sound, showcasing a wide variety of musical styles.

The lyrical themes are even more diverse, from the experience of young urban Aborigines to health-and-environment issues such as asbestosis. The single, *Freedom*, was written for Nelson Mandela's first visit to Australia. Here, Carmody connects the themes of freedom, equality and justice, and ties them to the Aboriginal beliefs in a Mother Earth which links 'the law, the land and human birth'.

The breadth of vision is typical. At one moment Carmody is writing of 'the majesty of the universe, beyond all human worth, through which the Messenger soars suspended in the sacred cathedral of the earth'; at another of the darker urban realities of freeways and McDonalds; and at yet another of the trendy lefties he calls the 'bourgeois drop-out progeny', who 'eat organic food from land their forbears stole'.

Carmody's *Bloodlines* complements Yothu Yindi's foray into the commercial music industry. Together they form an indelible presence on the stage of the Australian music industry - one which should resound to the benefit of indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Politics ★★★★★

Entertainment ★★★★★

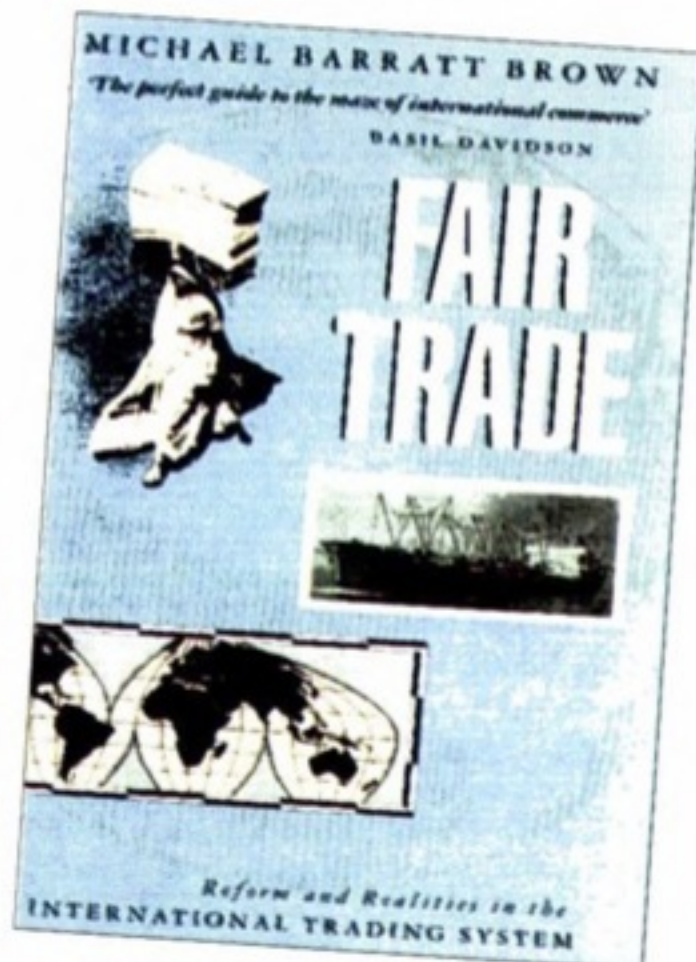
Fair Trade

by Michael Barratt Brown (Zed)

Twopence in the pound, two cents in the dollar - that is, at best, the tiny fraction of what we pay for coffee and sugar that flows back to the plantation workers who picked the berries or cut the cane. Much the same is true of the other products that the South sells to the industrialized North. The plight of the individual peasants is matched by that of the countries they inhabit, which are up to their necks in debt.

'Unfair Trade', the first part of Michael Barratt Brown's admirably clear guide to a notoriously soporific subject, explains how peasants and labourers in the South are exploited all the way along the line: by the local middlepeople, moneylenders and speculators (known as coyotes in Mexico, piranhas in Peru and as sharks elsewhere); by the almighty multinationals and the operators in the international commodity markets.

It is one thing to show what is wrong; another to say what might be done about it. But the second



part of the book - 'Making Trade Fairer' - goes that extra difficult mile to suggest how things might change. We have good cause to be sceptical about the possibility of the global powers-that-be accepting fairer regulations for trade that hit their own pockets but Barratt Brown's case for them is incontrovertible. And in the meantime we can take direct action as consumers by supporting both the growing network of Alternative Trading Organizations and the associated idea of a Fair Trade Mark, to be awarded to products which offer a fairer deal to their Third World producers.

Politics ☆☆☆☆

Entertainment ☆☆

STAR RATING

Excellent ☆☆☆☆
Very good ☆☆☆
Good ☆☆☆
Fair ☆☆
Poor ☆

Reviews editor: Chris Brazier

Metropolis

... being the science-fiction film that is steadily becoming fact.

WHEN German director Fritz Lang visited the United States in 1924, his first glimpse of the country was a night-time view of the New York skyline from the deck of an ocean liner. This, he later recalled, was the direct inspiration for what is still probably the most innovative and influential science-fiction film ever made - **Metropolis**.

Metropolis is a bleak vision of the early twenty-first century that is at once both chilling and exhilarating. This spectacular city of the future is a technological marvel of high-rise buildings connected by elevated railways and airships. It's also a world of extreme inequality and social division. The workers live below ground and exist solely to operate the city's machines in an endless routine of mind-numbing 10-hour shifts while the city's élite lead lives of luxury high above. Presiding over them all is the Master of Metropolis, John Fredersen, whose sole satisfaction seems to lie in the exercise of power.

Lang's graphic depiction of the future is conceived in almost totally abstract terms. The function of the individual machines is never defined. Instead this mass of dials,

levers and gauges symbolically stands for all machines and all industry, with the workers as slave-like extensions of the equipment they have to operate. Lang emphasizes this idea in the famous shift-change sequence at the start of the movie when the workers walk in zombie-like geometric ranks, all dressed in the same dark overalls and all exhibiting the same bowed head and dead-eyed stare. An extraordinary fantasy sequence sees one machine transformed into a huge open-jawed statue which then literally swallows them up.

On one level the machines and the exploited workers simply provide the wealth and services which allow the élite to live their lives of leisure, but on a more profound level the purpose of all this demented industry is to serve itself. Power, control and the continuance of the system from one 10-hour shift to the next is all that counts. The city consumes people and their labour and in the process becomes a perverse parody of a living being.

It is enlightening, I think, to relate the film to the modern global economy in which multinational corporations now routinely close their factories in one continent so that they can take advantage of cheap labour in another. Like the industry in **Metropolis**, these corporations' goals

of increased efficiency and profits have little to do with the welfare of the majority of their employees or that of the population at large. Instead their aims are to sustain the momentum of their own growth and to increase the monetary rewards to a tiny élite - their executives and shareholders. Fredersen himself is the essence of the big company boss: Rupert Murdoch would probably feel perfectly at home in his huge skyscraper office with its panoramic view of the city below. And it is important that there is never any mention of government in **Metropolis** - the whole concept is by implication obsolete. The only people who have power are the supreme industrialist, Fredersen, and his magician/scientist cohort Rotwang.

So far so good: when the images are allowed to speak for themselves the film is impeccable both in its symbolism and in its cynicism. The problem with **Metropolis** is its sentimental story-line, which sees Freder, Fredersen's son, instantly falling in love with the visionary Maria. Maria leads an underground pseudo-religious movement and preaches that the workers should not rebel but should await the arrival of a 'Mediator' between the 'Head' (capital) and the 'Hands' (labour). That mediator is the 'Heart' - love, as embodied, finally, by Freder's love of Maria and his father's love of him.

Lang wrote the screenplay in collaboration with his then wife Thea von Harbou. In 1933 he fled from the Nazis (and continued a very successful career in Hollywood). She stayed in Germany and continued to make films under the Hitler regime. There is a constant tension within the film between the too-tidy platitudes of von Harbou's script and the uncompromisingly caustic vigour of Lang's imagery.

To my mind, both in **Metropolis** and in the real world, it's not so much that the 'Head' and 'Hands' require a 'Heart' to mediate between them but that the 'Hands' need to develop their own 'Head', their own political consciousness, and act accordingly - through the ballot box, through buying power and through a sceptical resistance to the materialistic fantasies of the Fredersens.

All the same, **Metropolis** is probably more accurate now as a representation of industrial and social relations than it has been at any time since its original release. And Fredersen is certainly still the most potent movie symbol of the handful of elusive corporate figureheads who increasingly treat the world as a Metropolis-like global village.

Tom Tunney



Metropolis directed by Fritz Lang (1926)



QUESTIONS

...that have always intrigued you about the world will appear in this, your section, and be answered by other readers. Please address your answers and questions to 'Curiosities'.

I suspect that cannibalism is a racist myth. Did Idi Amin have to eat people other than for the benefit of our tabloid press? Can anyone provide me with evidence of cannibalism – either way?

● I firmly believe that cannibalism is a myth, but it is not a racist myth in the sense that I think the questioner means.

Rather, accusations of cannibalism rate alongside 'there be dragons': they fill in the blank spaces in the world beyond our own ken. So western tales of cannibals spread from the Aztecs of the 'New World' to the



Bone of contention: d'Idi or didn't he?

'Dark Continent' of Africa to the impenetrable jungles of Borneo and New Guinea as European contact spread in those directions and in that order.

Cannibalism is the ultimate symbol of Otherness accorded through ignorance to people 'not like us'. And the accusations fly in all directions; Europeans have been questioned by Africans on whether they really ate human babies.

For an overdone argument that cannibalism has existed you could read *Cannibals and Kings* by M Harris. For a concise and meticulous debunking you can do no better than to read *The Man-eating Myth* by W Arens.

Human beings do have a propensity for relishing the goriest stories, which may be why the idea of cannibalism still persists.

Joni Wilson
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

● The book *Rituals of Dinner* by Margaret Visser has an excellent chapter on cannibalism – its reasons, attitudes, manners. But why should cannibalism be racist? Does not Christian culture have symbolic cannibalism in Holy Communion? And what about organ transplant? Is that not a form of cannibalism too?

Mary Morgans
Southport, UK

● I have no doubt that accusations of cannibalism are often used to disparage other groups. Nevertheless, I do have evidence of its existence. In the mid-1970s I lived in the

Eastern Highlands of New Guinea and knew many Kamano (Kafe) people well. The recollections and stories of people then middle-aged and elderly contained many matter-of-fact references to their own consumption of enemy bodies in their youth. I don't think I did or said anything to encourage invention of such stories. I was not particularly interested in the topic and did not, and do not, find cannibalism any more shocking than any other means of disposing of dead bodies.

The reader who raised this topic should perhaps consider to what extent his question reflects his own view that there is something uniquely horrible about eating human bodies.

Elizabeth Mandeville
Lewes, UK

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

A number of years ago I heard that an Israeli team was researching the promotion of camel's milk to combat malnutrition because camel's milk is said to stay fresh longer than cow's and is easier to digest. Does anyone know what happened to this idea?

Sheila O'Reilly
Guelph, Canada

Can you please tell me more about a US Protestant sect whose adult members systematically beat their children 'in order to drive out the devil'? As I understand it, this is intended as preventative rather than punitive action.

Eric Stockton
Orkney, UK

Did or did not Pol Pot give centralized orders to kill opponents? Was or was not the evacuation of Phnom Penh due to shortages caused by US bombing?

Ross Wilson
Worcester, UK

Why is debt so rarely mentioned as a cause of poverty either in the media or during international charity fundraising events?

Pete Stevenson
Reading, UK

I have recently tried gunpowder tea which is a delicious, traditional, green tea, steamed and rolled in balls. Can anyone tell me if it is rolled by hand and, if so, who does it and are there any health risks incurred? And finally, is this tea machine- or sun-dried?

S Hills
London, UK

Does anyone know the origin of the belief that a stork brings a new baby? Why should storks be associated with childbirth?

Mary Morgans
Southport, UK

If you have any questions or answers please send them to *Curiosities*, *New Internationalist*, 55 Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, UK, or to your local NI office (see inside front cover for addresses).



THE VOICE OF REASON

Of course, we recognize and fully accept that capitalism DOES have its faults...



but, unfortunately, the SAD fact of the matter is that COMMUNISM has been tried, and FAILED...



So WHAT ALTERNATIVE does this really leave us, except to...



A future from the past

*Changes in Vietnam made it possible for a young refugee to return to the scene of her childhood. **Liêu Trung** reflects on the experience and the future – her country's and her own.*

FOURTEEN years ago my family left Vietnam in secrecy. We dared not tell even our closest relatives. Escape in those uncertain days was the only option left open for some people and it meant one of two things – freedom or death.

When I left I had to forget my country in order to survive. But in 1989 the Government's *Doi Moi* ('renovation') policy made a return journey possible. Why did I need to go back to a country I had left in secrecy and with fear? I wanted to find an answer to this question, to rediscover my roots, my forgotten background and my country.

As I left the airport and entered Saigon my anticipation turned to shock. Less than 24 hours before I had been in a country which has everything. Now I found myself in the midst of poverty and chaos. 'Is this what I came for?' was my first reaction. Contrary to the images I have seen while living outside Vietnam, Saigon is small and dark, the streets and roads dirty, the atmosphere polluted and smelly. Houses and shops are built in a chaotic way. It was like stepping into an unkempt backyard. I was ashamed to have such thoughts, desperate to cling to something familiar, to reassure myself that this was indeed my country.

I had been looking forward to walking down the familiar streets of Quy Nhon, the routes I took to school 14 years ago. Nothing had forewarned me of the drastic changes to my small town. The park, cinema, school, library; the ice-cream parlour and the pagodas; the railway tracks and the big market where once I played as a child, were no longer the same. Gone were the long, thin neon lights in pink, yellow, blue and white; gone the jostle and the crowded tables. In their place dull lights, Russian- and Chinese-style posters advertising supposedly sumptuous ice-cream.

In my heart I began to wonder what would have happened to me if I had never left. Would I have had an education? Would I have had a family by now? Would my life have been different from all the other young women living in Vietnam?

By chance one of my best schoolfriends recognized me in a bank one sunny morning. We arranged a class reunion, where we talked about how our adult lives had begun and – this was very special to me – about their hopes for the future in a peaceful, liberated and changing Vietnam. Their lives had been very different from mine. It was hard for me to relate to my past, looking through the eyes of the 12-year-old girl I had been when I last saw them at this circle of friends with changed personalities and circumstances.

All the boys had been through compulsory army training and served for three years in Cambodia, on the Vietnam/China border or at home. Some regions made military service compulsory for

girls too. One bright, moonlit night Châu - who had been our school class captain - cried out in a sudden outburst of joy: 'Five years ago I would not have been allowed to enjoy myself as I have tonight. I would have been patrolling the streets with a loaded gun on my shoulder.' But the lucky ones – those who did not have to go to Cambodia or to the border with China – seemed mostly to have enjoyed their time in the army. They learnt songs of freedom, love and courage and treasured these moments of youth.

Most of the girls in my class got married and started families in their early twenties. Huê, one of my closest friends, became a tough, independent businesswoman, buying and selling scrap

metal. She married before the others and now has a child aged seven. Thanh-Vân's family became well-off under American-style capitalism during the War. With her dowry she started a tailoring business. Her business, like others throughout Vietnam, is flourishing under the *Doi Moi* policy. Others – Loan, Tâm, Hanh – saw getting married as the only option and now run their family businesses; education for them finished at the twelfth grade.

Students whose families had been involved in some way with the enemy (America) were discriminated against by the Communist education system between 1975 and

1985; so were students whose relatives left Vietnam illegally. They were not allowed to enter university unless they denounced their families and showed their intention to become good citizens. But Hoà, whose father is a member of the Communist Party, sailed through university and has been working for three years in a state-owned bank.

I asked my friends how they felt about my returning. Many of them regarded me with suspicion. As a *Viet Kieu* – a Vietnamese person living abroad – I had already felt a general air of resentment among those who had struggled through the hard times in Vietnam. They have good reason for feelings against *Viet Kieus* who come back flaunting their new-found prosperity. Many of those who failed to escape grieve at their missed opportunities.

But these same people now believe they have an image of Vietnam's future. I sometimes feel a sense of loss for my teenage years spent away from home. Now I see my friends with new hopes and desires and I feel the need to return. This is a crucial time for my generation, growing up without war – a crucial time in my country's history. I came home in search of a past. Instead I discovered a future.



Liêu Trung meets up with her former schoolfriends. From left to right: Loan, Huê, Hanh, Châu, Liêu, Hoà, Tâm, Thanh-Van.

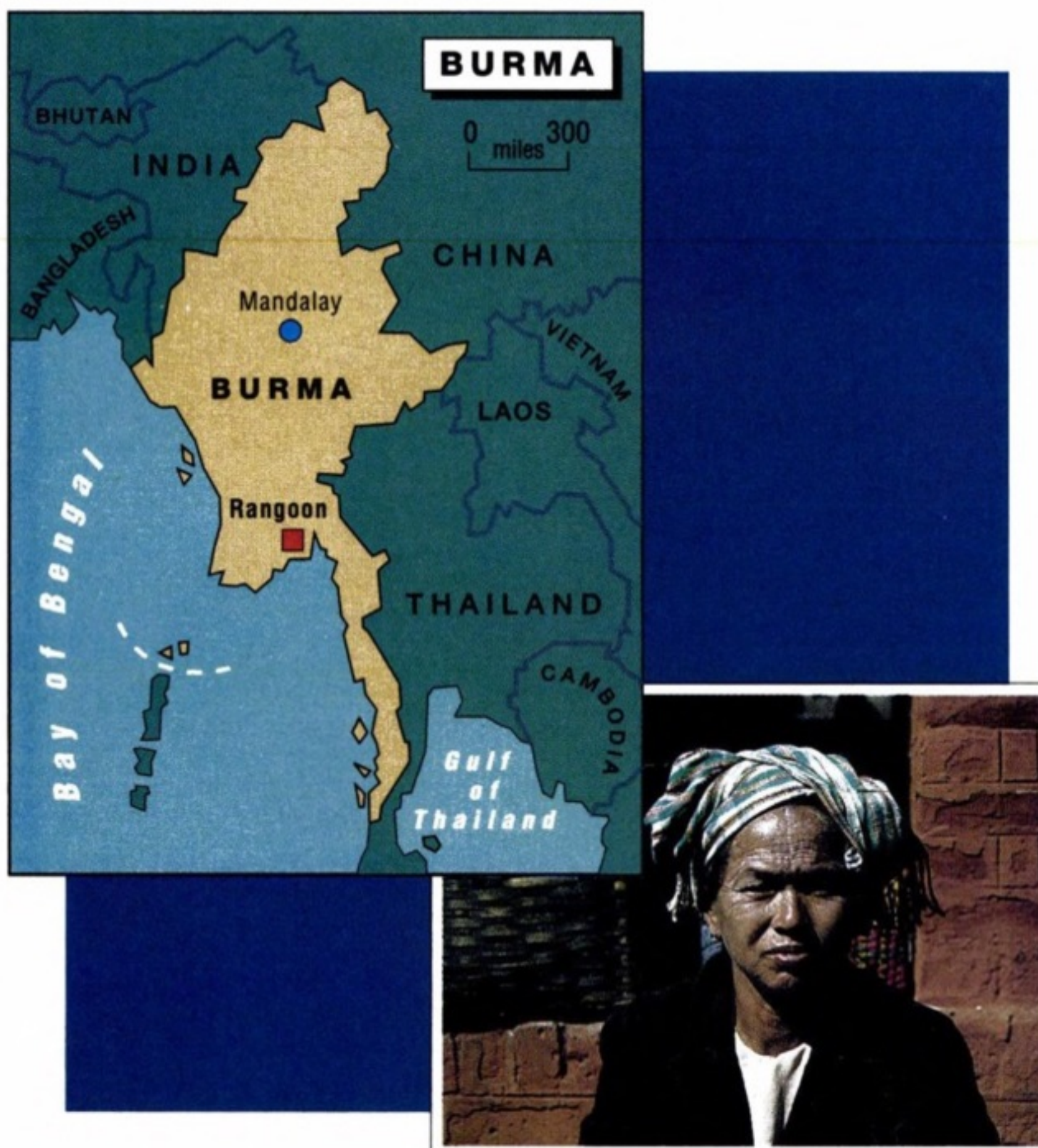
Liêu Trung currently lives in Cambridge, UK, and is a development worker with the Vietnamese Refugee Community.

Burma

BURMA has never had a famine; the land of golden pagodas and lush rice fields was offered this blessing in return for its kindness to the Buddha. But despite the legend it currently suffers one of the world's most repressive regimes. Today, martial law and the military junta's refusal to allow democracy under the elected but now imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, conspire to worsen human rights.

Suu Kyi is the daughter of Aung San, a hero of the Burmese independence movement who fought the British colonial regime and later formed a transitional administration before his assassination in July 1947. Suu Kyi's charisma, name and political skill helped turn the National League for Democracy (which she co-founded) into the leading political force in Burma. The NLD won 80 per cent of the 485 seats in national-assembly elections in 1990.

The Burmese military, which seized power and overturned democracy in 1962, denounces international pressure to accept these election results as 'interference in internal affairs'. The regime has used torture and extrajudicial



executions against students, ethnic minorities, Buddhist monks and anyone else who demands that the military step aside.

The Junta bought over \$1.2 billion dollars' worth of weapons from China. In 1988, one year before the bloodshed in Tiananmen Square when Chinese troops killed hundreds

of pro-democracy demonstrators, Burma's troops committed a similar atrocity in Rangoon, killing over 1,000 democracy activists who vainly pressed for an end to dictatorship.

Burma's junta aim to emulate Singapore's model for economic advancement under military rule. With an open-door policy to for-

eign investment, foreign reserves have rocketed and led the way to new jobs and a consumer society. The current craving for foreign goods rebounds from 25 years of 'State Socialism' when many imports were banned and most businesses nationalized.

Dissidents, meanwhile, demand international sanctions against Burma and a boycott of Pepsi-Cola, Amoco, Exxon, Texaco, Total, Petro-Canada, BHP, Mitsubishi, Daewoo and other multinationals doing business there. They condemn the United Nations Development Program for allocating 90 million dollars to the regime to kick-start the economy, arguing that this finances repression.

Military onslaughts forced more than 250,000 minority Muslims to flee the western province of Arakan during the past year. The military scored valuable victories against dissidents, pressuring the border town of Manerplaw where the NLD's 'Government-in-exile' works to co-ordinate the resistance movement.

Burma's name was changed to Myanmar in 1989 but pro-democracy groups refuse to use it, insisting that it symbolizes an illegal regime.

Richard Ehrlich

AT A glance

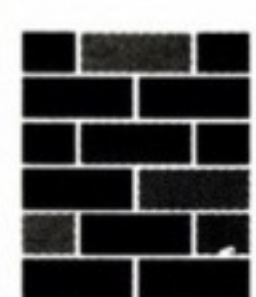
Excellent ★★★★★
Good ★★★★
Fair ★★★
Poor ★★
Appalling ★



INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★

Restrictive economic policies keep most of the population poor.

1982 ★★★★★



SELF-RELIANCE ★★

Most imports including medicines are smuggled in and sold on the black market.

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POSITION OF WOMEN ★★

Women more involved in trade but at least 40,000 women have been sold into Thailand's sex industry.

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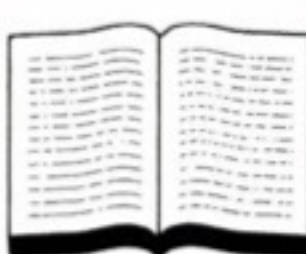


POLITICS

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1982



LITERACY ★★★★★

80% 89% male, 72% female.

1982 ★★★★★



FREEDOM ★

Executions, torture, imprisonment and enslavement as army porters.

1982 ★★



LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★

55 years (US 76 years)

1982 ★★

Leader: General Than Shwe and Major General Khin Nyunt lead an unelected military junta.

Economy: GNP per capita US\$220 (US\$21,790).

Monetary Unit: Kyat ('Chat')

Major industries: Sugar, textiles, fertilizers, cement and plywood. Agricultural production includes rice, pulses, beans, cotton and teak.

Main exports: Fish, forest products, base metals and ores. Burma now produces more heroin than any other country.

People: 44 million, concentrated in the Irrawaddy Delta and growing at 2.1 per cent. per annum.

Health: Infant mortality is 98 per 1,000 live births. Ten per cent of children under three suffer malnutrition. One doctor per 3,347 people.

Culture: Most Burmans are Theravada Buddhist. There are Hindu, Christian and Muslim minorities. Many Buddhist Burmans also follow animist cults.

Ethnic groups: Minorities include Chinese, Indians, Karens, Shans, Chins, Kachins, Mons, Arakanese and Karenni.

Language: Burmese spoken by 95 per cent. English widely spoken, Shan 11 per cent, Karen 5 per cent, Chinese 3 per cent and Kachin 2.5 per cent.

Sources: The State of the World's Children UNICEF 1993; Asian Development Bank; World Health Organization; Amnesty International.

Last profiled in February 1982.

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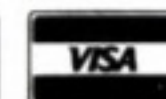
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April	Ecology of the Mind Kinds of Power Incl. 19th DARTINGTON CONFERENCE Spirit and the World	James Hillman, Ross Woodman, Marion Woodman
May	Ecology & Technology Restoring the Balance	John & Nancy Todd
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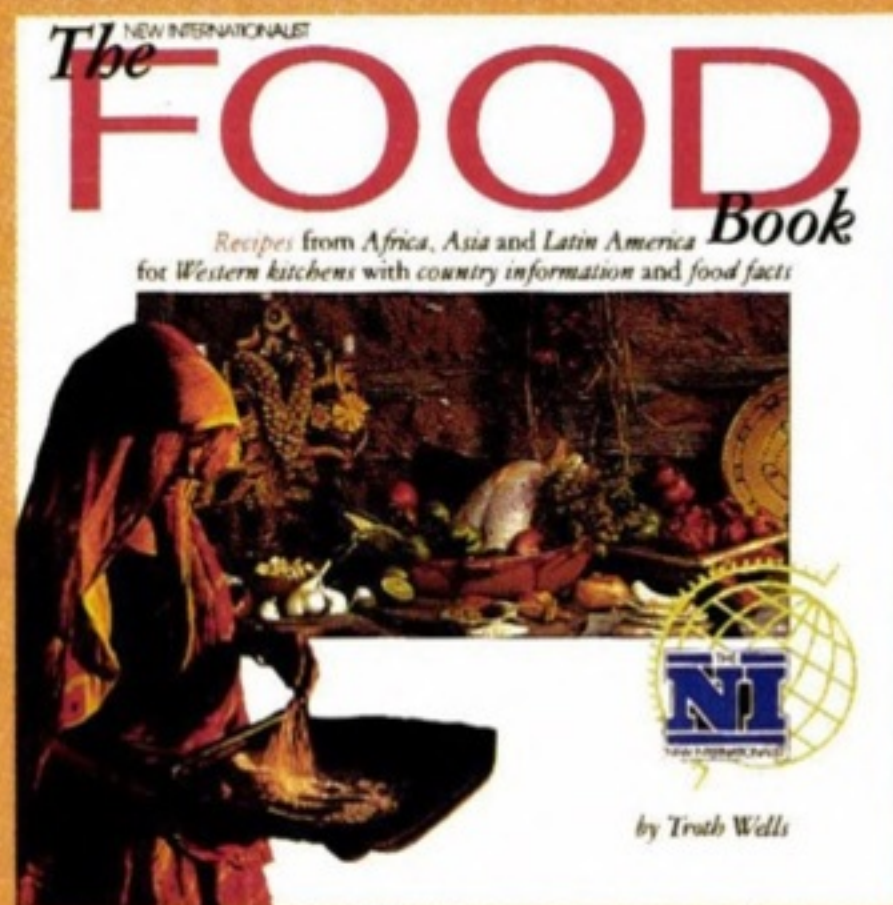
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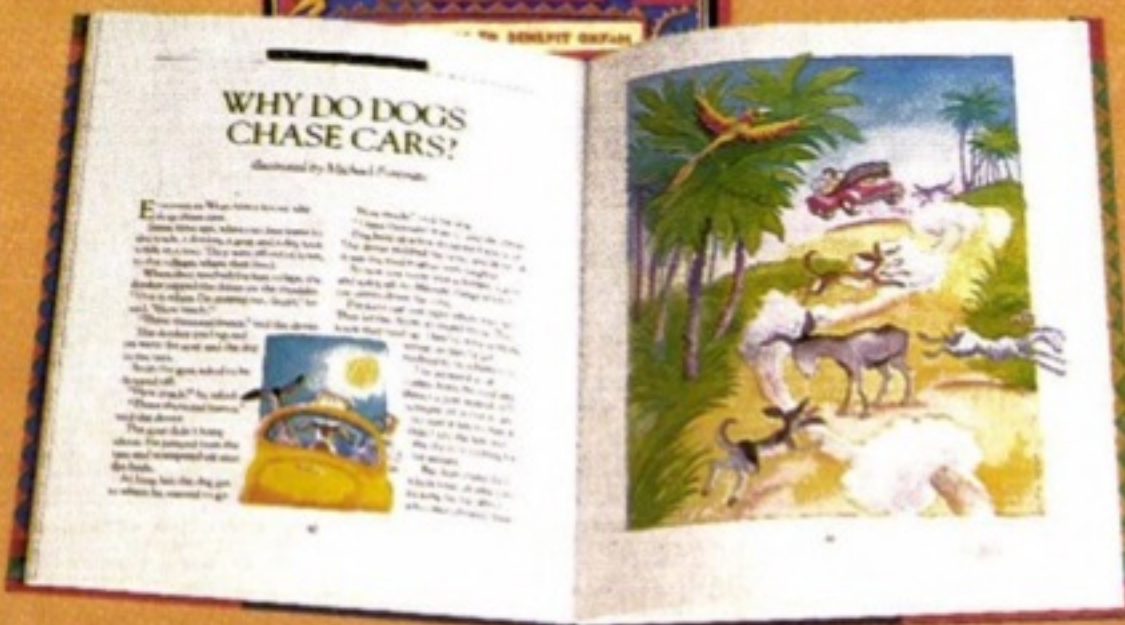
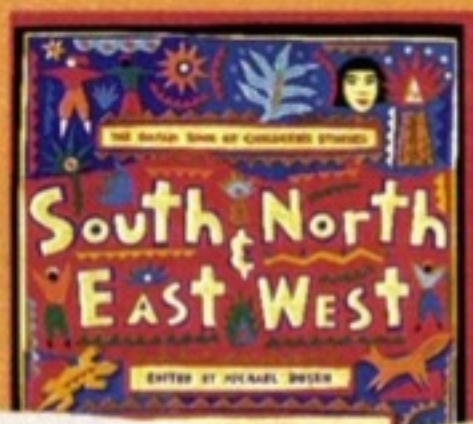
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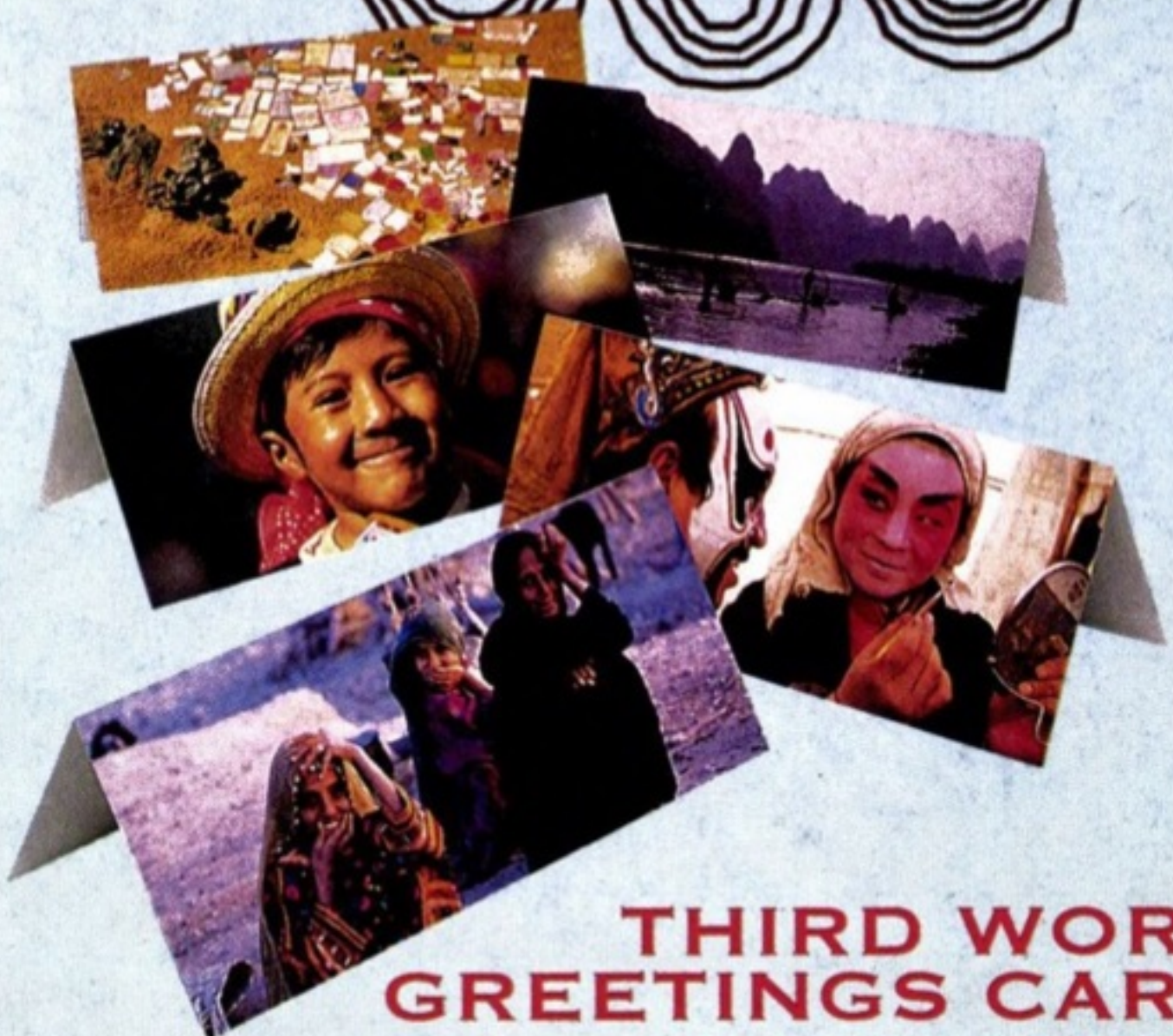


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